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# THE RELATION OF THE ANABAPTISTS TO THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES IN SWITZERLAND, 1525-1555

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# CHAPTER I

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Since the dawn of the Christian era the relationship between church and state has been one of the pivotal issues of civilization. Men have offered a variety of answers as to how church and state should be related. The much-persecuted Anabaptists of the sixteenth century presented one set of answers, radical for their age, which called for a decisive separation of the church from the state and a wide measure of freedom for the church to pursue its vocation in the world. In contrast were their opponents, the major Reformers, who in the stress of circumstances gradually developed a view in which the church was virtually coextensive with the political community and in which church and state closely integrated their methods and purposes. The Anabaptists were an aggravating problem to the civil authorities. This movement posed for the sixteenth century the crucial problem: how should religious dissent be handled?

Many contemporary historians have ventured to proclaim that the Anabaptist movement is an important source for modern principles of religious freedom, voluntary religious association, and separation of church and state. "The Anabaptists," observes the author of Church and State in the United States, "were of vital importance in paving the way . . . for our American religious freedom."[1] An even more positive evaluation of the role of the Anabaptists is given by Rufus M. Jones, the Quaker historian:

> Judged by the reception it met at the hands of those in power, both in Church and State, equally in Roman Catholic and in Protestant countries,

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[1] Anson Phelps Stokes, Church and State in the United States (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), I, 112.

> the Anabaptist movement was one of the most tragic in the history of Christianity; but, judged by the principles, which were put into play by the men who bore this reproachful nickname, it must be pronounced one of the most momentous and significant undertakings in man's eventful religious struggle after the truth. It gathered up the gains of earlier movements, it is the spiritual soil out of which all nonconformist sects have sprung, and it is the first plain announcement in modern history of a programme for a new type of Christian society which the modern world, especially in America and England, has been slowly realizing--an absolutely free and independent religious society, and a State in which every man counts as a man, and has his share in shaping both Church and State.[1]

Enthusiastic testimonies such as this suggest that a study of the relationship of the Anabaptists to the civil authorities may be relevant as background material to current discussions of religious freedom, relation of church and state, and similar issues. The purpose of this study, however, is not to evaluate the cultural significance of the Anabaptist movement for later centuries. The purpose here is rather to study the encounter between the Anabaptists and the civil authorities in the context of the early Reformation period.

Theories of church and state are articulated, not so much in the tranquil periods of civil and religious peace, as in those turbulent years when states, movements, and institutions are in conflict. So it was that political theory flowered in seventeenth century England. Similarly the established church and the state developed their theories and practice concerning dissent in the heated combat against the persistent Anabaptists. The Anabaptist theories of the Christian's relationship to the state matured through conflict and suffering.

This study poses two interrelated sets of problems: (1) the techniques and theories of the several Swiss governments in relation to the challenge of Anabaptist dissent, (2) Anabaptist thought and practice in regard to the civil authorities.

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[1] Rufus M. Jones, Studies in Mystical Religion (London: Macmillan, 1909), p. 369. Cf. Ernest A. Payne, The Anabaptists of the 16th Century and Their Influence in the Modern World (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1949), p. 7 and Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, trans. O. Wyon (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1949), II, 698-99.

The first set of problems pertains to the civil authorities: What techniques did the civil authorities use to meet the challenge of the Anabaptists? What special problems did governments encounter in dealing with the Anabaptists? What legal status was granted the Anabaptists? What theories were employed to justify persecution and the various strategies of suppression? What approaches were most effective in containing and in eliminating the Anabaptist movement?

The second set of problems relates to the Anabaptists: How did the Anabaptists respond to the various tactics of the authorities? What effect did state action have upon the nature of the Anabaptist movement? Did the Anabaptists articulate a philosophy of the Christian's relationship to the civil authorities? Did they recognize the magistracy as having a legitimate function in society? Was that function only to meet the needs of non-Christians or did they acknowledge that government also benefited Christians? Were they proponents of violent revolution? How did the Anabaptists view an established church? Were they advocates of religious freedom? How did the Anabaptists confront issues such as participation in the functions of the magistracy, the fulfillment of military obligations, swearing of an oath, use of the courts of law, payment of taxes, and conformity to civic mores?

This is a study, therefore, of how the civil authorities viewed and acted towards the Anabaptists and, second, how the Anabaptists viewed and acted towards the civil authorities.

Several terms demand explanation at the outset. The term "civil authorities" is used in the title of this study in preference to "state" because the latter might suggest a more narrow connotation: a modern nation-state or a completely sovereign political entity. The term "civil authorities" (Obrigkeit) is used in the broadest sense to include all officials and institutions of government at the various levels: the prince, mayor, councils, courts, local officials, subordinate officers of government, police, military, and also the representatives of the established church. The clergy, of course, cannot be fully equated with the civil authority. Whereas an Ulrich Zwingli dominated the Zurich government, a Berchtold Haller at Bern and an Oecolampadius at Basel were not masters of their respective governments. Nonetheless, the clergy were the employees of the government and often the spokesmen, strategists, and motivating forces in the governmental policy directed against Anabaptist dissent. Since the clergy cannot be disengaged from their association with the civil authorities, churchmen will have a prominent place in the pages of this study.

The scope of this inquiry must be limited to dimensions which are manageable. A definition of Anabaptism will be employed which confines the term to a particular kind of Reformation sectarianism, namely the peaceful, moderate, evangelical, Biblical variety. The chapter following will be devoted to a definition and description of the term "Anabaptism" as it will be used in this dissertation. The scope of this study must also be limited chronologically and geographically.

The period included begins with 1525, the year when the Anabaptist movement originated in Zurich, Switzerland, and closes with 1555, the year of the Religious Peace of Augsburg. The generation from 1525 to 1555 represents the flowering period of Swiss-South German Anabaptism. Under persistent persecution the movement had begun to wane by mid-century. During this thirty-year period the essential issues for our problem of study had defined themselves and virtually the whole range of tactics had already been employed against Anabaptist dissent.

The region comprising this study includes the German-speaking portion of Switzerland. The objective here will be to examine the relationship between the Anabaptists and the civil authorities, area by area. Particular attention will be devoted to the three areas of Zurich, Bern, and Basel where the movement took deep root. In these territories the basic issues in the problem for study were battled out in a prolonged series of encounters between the Anabaptists and the civil authorities. Attention will also be given to the vigorous movements which arouse in Schaffhausen, St. Gall, and Appenzell. The more modest Anabaptist developments in such regions as Solothurn, the Forest Cantons, and Graubünden will receive treatment in conjunction with those areas from whence these particular groups derived.

The Anabaptist movement had a general cohesiveness throughout the entire German-speaking region of Switzerland and South Germany, and, therefore, could be properly treated as a unit. This study, however, will be devoted to the history of the problem only in Switzerland where Anabaptism had its birth and enjoyed its earliest foliation. A sequel to this treatise should be a study of the same problem in the area of South Germany.

The third chapter on the "Legal Bases for Persecution" includes a consideration not only of the legislation of the Swiss Confederation pertaining to the Anabaptists but also an examination of the recesses and mandates of the Holy Roman Empire. Although most of the cantons and territories of Switzerland were virtually independent of imperial authority, occasional references are found in records of the period which indicate that the Swiss civil authorities were thoroughly cognizant of the imperial laws governing the treatment of Anabaptists. It has seemed appropriate, therefore, that for an understanding of the legal policy behind the programs of suppression, to include an examination of the laws of both the Confederation and the Empire. The most significant legal agreements, mandates, and recesses applicable to the Anabaptists are reproduced in the appendix of this volume.

A variety of materials constitute the resources of this study. These include documents from governmental sources pertaining to the Anabaptists: the records of court trials and other hearings; the sentences passed by various courts and councils; the records of income and expenditure of fiscal officers; the letters of instruction from the central government to local officials; the letters and intelligence reports from local officials to the central authorities; the records of deliberations, resolutions, and mandates of the civil authorities; and the correspondence between governments. The materials from Anabaptist sources are of great importance. They, however, have had less good fortune than governmental documents in surviving the depredations of time. Included among these are the following: letters of the brethren, hymns, sermons, polemical tracts, devotional tracts, confessions of faith, accounts of martyrdom, and petitions to the authorities. Among other sources of information are the following: records of public and private disputations, correspondence of contemporary observers, records of the chroniclers, polemical writings of contemporaries, and the records of ecclesiastical agencies.

Concluding this treatise will be a summary analysis of the techniques and theory of the civil authorities in the handling of Anabaptist dissent and, second, a summation of the Anabaptist theory concerning the Christian's relationship to the civil authorities.

## CHAPTER II

## THE MEANING OF "ANABAPTISM"

Every student of the Anabaptist movement must struggle initially with the problem of definition. The word "Anabaptist" (*Wiedertäufer*) is derived from the Greek and means literally "one who re-baptizes." The Lutherans, Zwinglians, and other foes of dissent used this term loosely to condemn all manner of nonconformity to the established church. It was a device not unlike the practice in our generation of indiscriminate labeling of all radicals as "Reds." There was method in this madness because the dissenters would be subject to the death penalty under an old Roman law directed against those who re-baptize (originally promulgated against the Donatists).[1] Some called the dissenters "sectarians." Luther categorized all nonconformists as "*Schwärmer*"--enthusiasts, subjectivists, inspirationists--seeing in every Anabaptist shades of a Thomas Müntzer or a Zwickau prophet. To Zwingli they were "Catabaptists" and in a moment of wrath, "apostles of the devil."[2]

The most general name given these sixteenth-century dissenters was "Anabaptist" (*Wiedertäufer*) or simply "*Täufer*." This designation was quite inappropriate to many so labeled. The spiritualists, for example, were disinterested in such traditional ordinances of the church as baptism and millennialists such as the Zwickau prophets and Müntzer were never known to have practiced believers' baptism. Even the proponents of believers' baptism vainly sought to disavow the name "Anabaptist," insisting that since infant baptism did not constitute true baptism, they were not re-baptizers. They preferred to call themselves simply "brethren" (*Brüder*).

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[1] Roland H. Bainton, *David Joris: Wiedertäufer und Kämpfer für Toleranz im 16. Jahrhundert*, Vol. VI of *Texte und Untersuchungen* of *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* (Leipzig: M. Heinsius Nachfolger, 1937), p. 11.

[2] Ulrich Zwingli, *Selected Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, ed. S. M. Jackson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1901), p. 137 (hereafter cited as *Selected Works of Zwingli*).

## The Problem of Classification

Within the past several generations historians of the Reformation have begun to make some necessary distinctions among the non-conformists of the sixteenth-century. Up until recent times it had been traditional to follow uncritically the polemical writers of the Reformation (Justus Menius, Urbanus Rhegius, Philipp Melanchthon, Andreas Althamer, Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, Heinrich Bullinger, John Calvin). To them the term "Anabaptism" covered an evil brew of enthusiasts, mystics, iconoclasts, spiritualists, revolutionaries, Biblical legalists. Beginning a century ago scholars have been slowly bringing to the light of day material about the Anabaptist movement which was hidden away in archival deposits.[1] Scholars today have source materials at hand which permit them to transcend the work of their predecessors who depended upon the Reformation polemical treatises hostile to Anabaptism. Now one may study the movement afresh from the writings, testimony, and recorded behavior of the Anabaptists themselves. This new evidence demonstrates that the widest possible variation existed among the radicals of the

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[1] For surveys of the historiography of Anabaptism see Harold S. Bender, "Recent Anabaptist Bibliographies," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (*MQR*), XXIV (January, 1950), 88-91; Harold S. Bender, "Recent Progress in Research in Anabaptist History," *MQR*, VIII (January, 1934), 3-17; Christian Hege, "Geschichtsschreibung," *Mennonitisches Lexikon* (*ML*), eds. Christian Hege and Christian Neff (Frankfurt am Main and Weierhof [Pfalz], 1913- ), I, 96-101; Walther Köhler, "Das Täufertum in der neueren kirchen-historischen Forschung," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, XXXVII (1940), 93-107; XXXVIII (1941), 349-64; XL (1943), 246-70; XLI (1948), 165-86; Franklin H. Littell, *The Anabaptist View of the Church*, Vol. VIII of *Studies in Church History* (Berne, Indiana: American Society of Church History, 1952), pp. 1-18; Wilhelm Pauck, "Research in the History of the Anabaptists," sec. 4 of "The Historiography of the German Reformation During the Past Twenty Years," *Church History*, IX (December, 1940), 335-40; Don. E. Smucker, "Anabaptist Historiography in the Scholarship of Today," *MQR*, XXII (April, 1948), 116-27; Eberhard Teufel, "Täufertum und Quakertum im Lichte der neueren Forschung," *Theologische Rundschau*, XIII (new ser., 1941), 21-57, 103-27, 183-97; XIV (1942), 27-52, 124-54; XV (1943), 56-80; XVII (1948), 161-81.

Reformation and that no study can proceed without a delineation among the types of nonconformity.

Among the earliest of the modern scholars to attempt a classification was the American church historian Albert Henry Newman, who distinguished five distinct parties among the Anabaptists: (1) the chiliastic Anabaptists like Thomas Müntzer, the Zwickau Prophets, Melchior Hofmann, the Münsterites; (2) the soundly Biblical Anabaptists including the Swiss Anabaptists, Hutterian Brethren, and Mennonites; (3) the mystical Anabaptists as Hans Denck, Ludwig Haetzer, Jacob Kautz, Johann Bünderlin, Caspar Schwenckfeld; (4) the pantheistic Anabaptists as David Joris and Heinrich Niclaes; (5) the anti-trinitarian Anabaptists as Johannes Campanus, Michael Servetus, the Socinians.[1]

The brilliant German scholar, Ernst Troeltsch, used his provocative sociological typologies to arrive independently at conclusions not dissimilar from Newman.[2] As Troeltsch goes through the process of distinguishing among the great variety of movements in "sectarian and mystical Protestantism" he excludes many Reformation radicals and spiritualists from the Anabaptist category. Thus, in his usage the term "Anabaptist" comes to fit only those whom Newman describes as the "soundly Biblical Anabaptists."[3]

Rufus Jones, the Quaker historian, in his early studies of Continental mysticism had grouped mystics, spiritualists, and sectarians under the heading of "Anabaptism."[4] After further study, Jones, like his contemporary Troeltsch, was led to exclude the "exponents of a free, inward religion" (Hans Denck, Johann Bünderlin, Christian Entfelder, Caspar Schwenckfeld) from the ranks of the Anabaptists.[5] Jones concluded that the characteristic marks of Anabaptism were: (1) obedience to the new law of the Gospel; (2) a conception of the church as a community of saints, founded by covenant on the apostolic pattern, and preserved in purity by rigorous discipline; (3) the denial to magistrates of power to persecute men for their faith.[1]

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[1] Albert Henry Newman, A Manual of Church History, Vol. II, Modern Church History, 1517-1932 (3rd ed. revised; Philadelphia: American Baptist Publishing Society, 1932), pp. 156-200.

[2] Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, II, 694-772.

[3] *Ibid.*, II, 703-6.

[4] Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 389 ff.

[5] Rufus Jones, Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth

Johannes Kühn in his study of the interrelations between tolerance and revelation divided Biblical Protestantism into five major categories, one of which he classified as the "_täuferische Nachfolge_" (Anabaptist discipleship).[2] Using types of piety as a key to classification, Kühn distinguished the Anabaptists from those of prophetic, spiritualist, mystic, and ethical-rational persuasion.[3]

A mounting number of scholars of the Reformation have discarded the term "Anabaptism" as a general cover-all caption for Reformation radicalism. Such scholars as Walther Köhler,[4] Leonhard von Muralt,[5] Harold Bender,[6] Robert Friedmann,[7] Franklin Littell[8] have come to use the term "Anabaptist" or "_Täufer_" in the restricted sense of referring to the "soundly Biblical" wing of Reformation sectarianism.

If the term "Anabaptism" is granted a more narrow and definitive

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_Centuries_ (London: Macmillan, 1914), pp. 17-18, _passim_.

[1] _Ibid._, II, 17-18.

[2] Johannes Kühn, _Toleranz und Offenbarung_ (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1923), p. 223.

[3] _Ibid._, pp. 15-37.

[4] Walther Köhler, "Wiedertäufer," _Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart_, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1931), V, 1918.

[5] Leonhard von Muralt, "Zum Problem: Reformation und Täufertum," _Zwingliana_, VI (1934), 82-85, and _Glaube und Lehre der Schweizerischen Wiedertäufer in der Reformationszeit_ (Zurich: Beer and Co., 1938).

[6] Harold S. Bender, "The Anabaptist Vision," _MQR_, XVIII (April, 1944), 67-88.

[7] Robert Friedmann, "Conception of the Anabaptists," _Church History_, IX (December, 1940), 341-365.

[8] Littell, _op. cit._, pp. ix-xii.

meaning to afford greater precision of communication among historians, then students will have lost a much-used label for that potpourri of nonconformity of the Reformation era. At this juncture Roland H. Bainton comes forward to recommend a better phrase (anachronistic though it be) to describe all forms of spiritualist and sectarian dissent, calling all these radicals "the left wing of the Reformation."[1] Bainton includes the whole range of types: (1) the Zwickau prophets, (2) Thomas Müntzer, (3) the Swiss Anabaptists, (4) the Melchiorites and Münsterites, (5) the Mennonites, (6) the Hutterian Brethren, (7) the Schwenckfelders, (8) the Socinians.[2] Despite their fundamental differences, Bainton suggests that the left wing shared certain ideas in common: (1) a keen ethical concern, (2) a Christian primitivism, (3) a heightened sense of eschatology, (4) the separation of church and state.[3] In this study the term "Anabaptism" will be given a restricted usage, confining it to the Swiss Anabaptists, the Mennonites, and the Hutterian Brethren. When referring to the entire range of sixteenth century Protestant radicalism such terms will be employed as "left wing," "the radicals," "the dissenters," or "the nonconformists" of the Reformation.

Ample evidence comes from observers in the early sixteenth century that they discerned profound differences among the opponents to the established church. Hence, the typology of Newman, Bainton, and Kühn is well founded. A good place to seek distinctions would be in Zurich, the fountainhead of Anabaptism. Heinrich Bullinger, Zwingli's successor at Zurich, called all dissenters "Anabaptists," but he distinguished thirteen classes among them. Among those he included were the "spiritualist," "Münsterite," "ecstatic or enthusiastic," and "quietistic Anabaptists."[4] No friend of dissenters,

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[1] Roland H. Bainton, "The Left Wing of the Reformation," Journal of Religion, XXI (April, 1941), 124-34.

[2] Ibid., pp. 125-26.

[3] Ibid., pp. 126-33.

[4] Heinrich Bullinger, Der Widertoeufferen vrsprung/ Fürgang/ Secten/ Waesen/ Fürnemen vnd Gemeine Jrer leer Artickel/ ouch jre Gründ/ vnd warumb sy

Bullinger admits that most of the Anabaptists in his native Zurich should be classified as "general or ordinary Anabaptists" and he explains that as Biblicists they were free of the idiosyncracies of the other twelve varieties.[1] He proceeds then to characterize these peaceful, Biblical, evangelical Anabaptists with a remarkable objectivity.

In Strassburg during the Reformation period were a multiplicity of nonconformist groups. Here, too, sharp distinctions were manifest. An Anabaptist from Horb, Hans Frisch, declared at his trial in November 1534 that among the sectarians in Strassburg there were actually three different parties: the followers of Melchior Hofmann, Jacob Kautz, and Wilhelm Reublin.[2] Hofmann was the millennialist, Kautz the spiritualist, and Reublin the "Anabaptist" or one of the Swiss Brethren. Wilhelm Reublin, a Swiss Anabaptist, had been associated with Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and the Zurich circle in the early months of the movement. Hans Frisch added that the millennialists and spiritualists tended to be intermixed.[3] In the year 1554 the distinction between the three parties continued to be in the mind of at least one observer.[4] The historian-chronicler Sebastian Franck, who was long resident in Strassburg, distinguished the spiritualists from the Anabaptists with their church organization and scriptural ordinances. At the close of his Türkenchronik of 1530 he records that in addition to the three major faiths of Protestant Christendom--Lutheran, Zwinglian, and Anabaptist (!)--there are the spiritualists.[5]

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sich absünderind/ vnnd ein eigne Kirchen anrichtind . . . (Zurich: Christoph Froschauer, 1561), pp. 16-68.

[1] Ibid., p. 16.

[2] Timoth. Wilh. Röhrich, "Zur Geschichte der strassburgischen Wiedertäufer in den Jahren 1527 bis 1543," Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie, XXX (1860), p. 79.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Sulzer to Bullinger, Oct. 6, 1554, Briefe von Strassburger Reformatoren, ihren Mitarbeitern und Freunden über die Einführung des "Interims" in Strassburg, ed. Wilhelm Horning (Strassburg, 1887), p. 47.

[5] Christian Neff, "Sebastian Franck," ML, II, 669.

Franck, who identifies himself with this fourth group, explains that the spiritualists teach that all external ceremonies, sacraments, discipline should be eliminated in order to make way for an invisible, spiritual church where the eternal, unseen Word rules.[1]

It is with reluctance that the term "Anabaptist" is used in this dissertation to designate a certain kind of Reformation dissent. One is constrained to do this because of the wide currency of the term. If one were to abandon the term "Anabaptist" it would be like trying to write a history of the Society of Friends without using the name "Quaker." More precise for our purposes is the expression "evangelical Anabaptists,"[2] but convenience recommends the elimination of the modifier. It would be appropriate to call them the "Swiss Brethren," for so they were called by their friends in the Swiss-South German sector.[3] The *Verein für Reformationsgeschichte* has generally adopted the term "*Täufer*" in preference to "*Wiedertäufer*" to designate the peaceful, evangelical Swiss-South German variety of Anabaptism.[4]

## The Problem of Definition

The Anabaptist movement was not born with a completely systematized theology and ethic. Anabaptist thought developed and coalesced as the brethren read their Bibles, prayed, conferred together, and forged their views in controversy with both the churchmen and the rulers as well as the other radical parties of the left wing. In the early years of the movement one finds variations in doctrine and emphasis even among the evangelical Anabaptists.

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] Friedmann, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

[3] The first edition (1564) of the Anabaptist hymnal, the *Ausbund*, uses the name "Swiss Brethren"--*Etliche schöne Christliche Lieder wie in der Gefengkniss zu Passaw im Schloss von den Schweitzer Brüdern durch Gottes gnad geticht und gesungen worden.* Cf. title page of *Ausbund . . .* (13th ed.; Lancaster, Pa., 1949). Cf. Harold Bender, *Conrad Grebel, c. 1498-1526: The Founder of the Swiss Brethren Sometimes Called Anabaptists* (Goshen, Ind.: Mennonite Historical Society, 1950), pp. xi-xii.

[4] Friedmann, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

A series of negative statements may serve to delineate what is defined as "Anabaptism." They were not millennialists like Melchior Hofmann, who saw visions, had revelations, and expected that Christ would return soon to establish an earthly kingdom at Strassburg.[1] On the other hand the Anabaptists had a quiet, non-speculative eschatology; they simply lived in the expectation that someday Christ would return and perhaps very soon. They were not chiliastic revolutionaries like the Münsterites, who seized the sword to hasten the day of the Lord and who forced upon others the "rule of the saints." In this study all evidence must be checked, however, to determine whether the evangelical Anabaptists were actually free of "revolutionary" strains. They were not spiritualists or mystics or what Rufus Jones describes as the "spiritual reformers." Unlike the Anabaptists these spiritualists were too subjectivistic, too individualistic to form continuing groups. The faith of the spiritualist was centered in the "eternal Word within the soul"--the doctrine of the Logos--and expressed itself in a disinterested attitude toward externals. The Anabaptists, in contrast, accented the objective authority of the Scripture, the concreteness of the Christian life, and the essentiality of the visible church and its ordinances. The Anabaptists were not anti-trinitarians like the Italian and Polish evangelicals. The Anabaptists did not agree with Caspar Schwenckfeld, David Joris, Melchior Hofmann in their counsel to stand still (Stillstand) in the evangelical crusade until Christ would reveal his will more explicitly. The negations of the Anabaptists suggest their affirmations.

The earliest known confession of faith of the Anabaptists is one which was unanimously adopted at a conference of Swiss Brethren, meeting on February 24, 1527, at "Schlatten am Randen."[2] It is generally recognized that this statement of faith was compiled under the direction of Michael Sattler of Stauffen, Baden, who was a leader among the Anabaptists until his early martyrdom in May 1527.[1] This confession, called a "Brotherly Union of a Number of Children of God Concerning Seven Articles," is characteristic of a traditional confession of faith in that it seeks to erect a dam against heretical thought--in this instance the doctrines of the state churchmen and certain unnamed dissenters, "false brethren."[2] It is a survey of the points of disagreement with their opponents, not a complete outline of Anabaptist teaching. The Schleitheim Confession is, thus, highly significant in delineating the Anabaptists from other dissenters and from the state churchmen. This confession was widely circulated in Anabaptist circles and even found its way into the hands of Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin, who both wrote treatises to the end of refuting the seven articles.[3] The seven articles of this statement of faith may be summarized as follows: (1) Baptism shall be given to those who request it and who repent, truly believe in Christ, and follow Him. This excludes infant baptism. (2) The church shall practice scriptural discipline (Matthew 18). (3) Only baptized and devout Christians may share in the unifying experience of the Lord's Supper, which is observed by the brotherhood in

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[1] Christian Neff, "Melchior Hofmann," ML, II, 326-35.

[2] For copies of the Schleitheim Confession in English translation see John C. Wenger (ed.), "The Schleitheim Confession of Faith," MQR, XIX (October, 1945), 243-53 and Harry E. Fosdick (ed.), Great Voices of the Reformation

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(New York: Random House, 1952), pp. 286-95. Cf. Robert Friedmann, "The Schleitheim Confession (1527) and other Doctrinal Writings of the Swiss Brethren in a Hitherto Unknown Edition," *MQR*, XVI (April, 1942), 82-87 (Friedmann lists on pp. 86-87 all known Mss. and prints of the Schleitheim Confession).

[1] Wenger, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

[2] Fritz Blanke, "Beobachtungen zum ältesten Täuferbekenntnis," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, XXXVIII, 2/3 (1940), 247.

[3] John Calvin, "Brieve instruction pour armer tous bons fideles contre les erreurs de la secte commune des Anabaptists 1544," *Ioannis Calvini Opera quae supersunt omnia*, VII (Vol. XXXV of *Corpus Reformatorum*, eds. G. Baum, E. Cunitz, and E. Reuss [Brunsvigae: C. A. Schwetschke et Filius, 1869]), pp. 45-142; Ulrich Zwingli, "Elenchus," *Huldreich Zwinglis sämtliche Werke*, ed. E. Egli *et al.*, VI (Vol. XCVIII of *Corpus Reformatorum* [Leipzig: M. Heinsius Nachfolger, 1936]), 1-196 (hereafter cited as *ZW* with the volume number of the *Werke* rather than of the *Corpus Reformatorum*). For an English translation and abridgement of the "Elenchus" consult *Selected Works of Zwingli*, pp. 123-257.

remembrance of the broken body and shed blood of Christ. (4) The Christian shall follow the commands of God and separate himself from all evil practices of the world, including the use of the sword to defend friends or to vanquish enemies. (5) The pastor shall be one of good report who is to read, admonish, teach, warn, discipline, give communion, and care for the brotherhood. The needs of the pastor shall be supported by the church. If the pastor errs, he shall be disciplined by the congregation. If the pastor is banished or executed, another shall be ordained immediately to care for the brotherhood. (6) The power of the magistrate is ordained of God for those outside the true church to punish the evil and protect the good. Inside the brotherhood the ban is used to warn and to exclude the one who has sinned. The nonresistant Christian cannot judge in civil disputes nor can he be a magistrate. (7) Christ prohibits the faithful to swear an oath. Christ has taught that one's communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay. (This statement of faith was written in the form of an open letter to "dear brethren and sisters" and thus suggests a certain measure of equality of sexes in the early Anabaptist brotherhoods.)[1] The recipients of this confession are admonished in conclusion to "presevere without interruption in the known will of God."[2] The principles articulated in this confession of faith will be found to be basic themes running through all Anabaptist thought: the believers' church, nonconformity to the world, nonresistance, and a concrete Biblicism.

It is instructive for our purposes to observe the diligent efforts of students friendly to Anabaptism to discover the essence or the constitutive element of the movement.[3] One might seek the key in the name of the movement and define Anabaptism in terms of the baptismal rite. Thus, Anabaptism would be defined as a movement comprising those who teach and practice believers' baptism. Adult baptism was, of course, an important symbol dividing the gathered church of the "reborn" from the parish church into which infants were born. One observes, however, that believers' baptism is not an end but an instrument, like discipline, toward the attainment of a pure church. Hence, believers' baptism cannot be the essence of the movement.

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[1] Wenger, op. cit., pp. 247, 252. [2] Ibid., pp. 252-53.

[3] Consult the seven articles by various authors on Anabaptist theology that appeared in a special number of the MQR, XXIV (January, 1950).

Another theory is that of Fritz Heyer who asserts that "the ultimate significance of Anabaptism of the sixteenth century is grounded on the concept of the church."[1] Franklin Littell, author of The Anabaptist View of the Church, concurs with Heyer and submits this definition: "The Anabaptists proper were those in the "Left Wing" who gathered and disciplined a "True Church" (rechte Kirche) upon an apostolic pattern."[2] Suggestive as this definition is, the concept of the church was not the ultimate idea of the Anabaptists, but was derivative from their conception of the nature of the Christian experience and life.[3]

Those who have been attracted to the pacifism and mutual aid practices of the Anabaptists may be inclined to find the heart of the movement in the love and brotherhood ethic of the Anabaptists. It would be presumptuous to insist on this as the unique contribution of the movement, for certainly the Anabaptists held no exclusive proprietary rights to the Christian love ethic. Mutual aid and nonresistance, like other essential principles of the movement, derive their meaning from the Anabaptist's understanding of the nature of the Christian experience and life.[4]

Noting that the speech of the Anabaptists was imbued with the Biblical idiom, one might join with Donovan Smucker who declares that the "supreme triumph of the Anabaptists" was their "rediscovery of the theology of the Bible."[1] Smucker states the Anabaptists were a group of Bible students, "mediating all insights concerning faith, ordinances, life, and death through the Scriptures."[2] All evangelicals of the Reformation, however, were at one with the Anabaptists in stressing the normativeness of Scripture. The Anabaptists differentiated themselves from the Reformers, not in their biblicism but in their approach to the content of Scripture. The Old Testament was not granted parity of authority with the New Testament--the revelation of the new covenant of Christ. The Anabaptist thus interpreted the Bible Christologically, finding the Synoptic Gospels to be perhaps the most decisive portion of Scripture.[3]

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[1] Fritz Heyer, Der Kirchenbegriff der Schwärmer, No. 166 of Schriften der Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte (Leipzig: M. Heinsius Nachfolger, 1939), p. 3.

[2] Littell, op. cit., p. 50.

[3] Harold S. Bender, "The Anabaptist Theology of Discipleship," MQR, XIX (January, 1945), 6.

[4] Ibid., p. 27.

Others have sought to go behind the formal concepts of baptismal ordinances, church, Scripture and to find the essence of Anabaptism in its distinctive form of piety. Johannes Kühn calls this piety the "*täuferische Nachfolge*."[4] The editor of the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Harold S. Bender, concludes that the most essential and characteristic concept of Anabaptism is this concept of discipleship (*die Nachfolge Christi*).[5] Bender explains that the Anabaptist conceived that discipleship meant

> . . . the bringing of the whole of life under the Lordship of Christ, and the transformation of this life, both personal and social after his image. From this point of view they subjected not only the church but the whole social and cultural order to criticism, rejected what they found to be contrary to Christ, and attempted to put into actual practice His

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[1] Donovan E. Smucker, "The Theological Triumph of the Early Anabaptist-Mennonites," *MQR*, XIX (January, 1945), 6.

[2] Donovan E. Smucker, "Anabaptist Theology in the Light of Modern Theological Trends," *MQR*, XXIV (January, 1950), 73.

[3] Friedmann, "Conception of the Anabaptists," *op. cit.*, 359-61.

[4] Kühn, *op. cit.*, p. 19; cf. Friedmann, "Conception of the Anabaptists," *op. cit.*, pp. 355-59.

[5] Bender, "The Anabaptist Theology of Discipleship," *op. cit.*, p. 27.

teachings as they understood them both ethically and sociologically.[1] This writer concurs with Bender that the uniqueness of the Anabaptists is to be found not so much in their formal concepts of the church, brotherhood ethic, and sola scriptura as it is in their conception of the Christian experience--a discipleship of Christ which they sought to objectify in life. From their conception of discipleship flowed their polity and ethics in all its concreteness.

Seeking to integrate the findings of this inquiry--particularly Littell's emphasis on the concept of the church and Bender's emphasis on the concept of the Christian life--the writer proposes the following definition of Anabaptism: The Anabaptists were those of the "left wing" of the Reformation who affirmed that discipleship of Christ was the regulative purpose of their lives and who covenanted together to form a gathered and disciplined church on the New Testament pattern.

## The Problem of Origins

A variety of interpretations has been offered in explanation of the origin of the Anabaptist movement. The socialist writers, notably Karl Kautsky, see Anabaptism as constituted of the disinherited classes and thus preeminently a class-movement.[2] A study made by this writer of the vocational backgrounds of more than three hundred Swiss and South German Anabaptists reveals that less than ten percent of those studied came from the lower end of the economic scale: the day laborers and servants. More than two-thirds were of the "middle classes"--freemen and artisans--and forty-one were former priests, monks, and nuns.[1] The data at hand, thus, does not support the generalizations of Kautsky, Bax, and Niebuhr.

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[1] Ibid., p. 29.

[2] Karl Kautsky, Die Vorläufer des Neueren Sozialismus (Stuttgart: J. H. W. Dietz, 1895), pp. 312-436; Ernest Belfort Bax, Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1903), pp. 63-64; H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1929), pp. 34-38.

Albrecht Ritschl, the historian of Pietism, is one who sees in Anabaptism an inner-worldly asceticism which is a continuation of medieval Catholicism, particularly as found in the Franciscan Tertiarii.[2] He places seventeenth-century Pietism in this lineage. Ritschl finds striking parallels between these movements and Franciscan ideas: the emotional warmth of the brotherhood ethic, the restitution of apostolic Christianity through renunciation of the world, personal purity, poverty, simplicity, and expectation of the Kingdom of God.[3] Interesting though some of the parallels be, evidence is lacking to demonstrate that there is a lineal descent of ideas from groups like the Franciscans to the Anabaptists.

Another tradition which has had persuasive appeal in Anabaptist-Mennonite circles since the "History of Heresy" of Sebastian Franck first appeared,[4] is that the Anabaptists are heirs to a continuous line of non-conformists who have handed down the perennial fire of pure faith since Apostolic times.[5] Thieleman J. van Braght, editor of the monumental _Martyrs' Mirror_ of the seventeenth century, was a faithful adherent to this theory.[6] Perhaps the most able spokesman for this theory was Ludwig Keller, who found the ideological roots of Anabaptism in the Waldenses and other "old evangelical brotherhoods" for whom he posits a continuous separate existence since Constantine.[1] Theories of Waldensian sources for Anabaptism, while abandoned by most contemporary historians of the Anabaptists, have persistently appealed to students of the movement in the region of Bern.[2] The evidence presented in behalf of the theory that the Anabaptists are of Waldensian ancestry consists essentially of parallelisms between the two movements. These scholars seek to substantiate their case by pointing to the old-evangelical "climate of opinion" in certain regions where Anabaptists emerged.

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[1] Robert Kreider, "Vocations of Swiss and South German Anabaptists," _Mennonite Life_, VIII (January, 1953), 38-42.

[2] Albrecht Ritschl, _Geschichte des Pietismus_ (Bonn: Adolph Marcus, 1880), I, 29-36.

[3] _Ibid._, I, 33.

[4] Sebastian Franck, "Chronica der Römischen Kätzer," Part 3 of _Chronica, Zeÿtbüch und Geschichtbibel_ (Strassburg: Balthasar Beck, 1531), pp. cccxxxvb-cccclxiib.

[5] For a survey of the historians adhering to this view see Littell, _op. cit._, pp. 11-12, and Friedmann, "Conception of the Anabaptists," _op. cit._, pp. 349, 352-53.

[6] Thieleman J. van Braght (ed.), _The Bloody Theater or Martyrs' Mirror of the Defenseless Christians . . ._ (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1950), pp. 63, 287 (hereafter cited as _Martyrs' Mirror_).

"The profound spiritual father of the Anabaptists was Erasmus," declares the late historian Walther Köhler, who, however, does not contend that humanism was the exclusive source of Anabaptism.[3] In agreement with Köhler is Professor Leonhard von Muralt of Zurich who concludes that the Anabaptists, as well as the Reformers, are intellectual-spiritual heirs of Christian humanism.[4] To explain how humanism was preparatory to Anabaptism, von Muralt singles out the indefatigable work of the humanists on the Bible and their emphasis on the distinctive significance of the Bible as the sourcebook for the Christian faith. Further, the humanist influence is found in the uncompromising moralism (_Tatchristentum_) and religious pacifism of Anabaptism. Professor von Muralt observes that through Erasmus the _Nachfolge Christi_ conception of the _devotio moderna_ was mediated to the Anabaptists.[5] Walther

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[1] Ludwig Keller, _Die Reformation und die älteren Reformparteien_ (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1885), p. 372.

[2] Ernst Müller, _Geschichte der bernischen Täufer_ (Frauenfeld: J. Huber, 1895), pp. 1, 52-69; Samuel Geiser _et al._, _Die Taufgesinnten-Gemeinden_ (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1931), pp. 88-107; Delbert Gratz, "The Bernese Anabaptists in the Sixteenth Century," _MQR_, XXV (July, 1951), 147-53.

[3] Köhler, "Wiedertäufer," _op. cit._, p. 1918.

[4] Von Muralt, _Glaube und Lehre der Schweizerischen Wiedertäufer . . ._, pp. 6-7.

[5] _Ibid._, p. 7.

Köhler also asserts that the Anabaptist convictions regarding religious toleration are of humanist origin.[1] It is the conclusion of this writer that humanism influenced the rise of the Anabaptist movement in its attitude toward Scripture, the person of Jesus, and the normativeness of the New Testament church. Humanism, however, with its scholarly, dispassionate quality, can at best explain only partially the emergence of Anabaptism.[2] Whereas the humanists attributed power to intellectually apprehended truth, the Anabaptists minimized the role of reason in Christian knowledge. Humanism, further, had little of that contagious missionary zeal which gripped the Anabaptists. Unlike the intellectually aristocratic quality of humanism, Anabaptism was unapologetically a movement of the people. Where the eye of the humanist was centered on man, the Anabaptist centered his vision on God. What is the end of man? To the humanist the end of man was to know himself. To the Anabaptist it was to do the will of God. The humanist was a scholar, the Anabaptist a disciple.

Another theory of Anabaptist origins which is firmly imbedded in the polemics of the sixteenth century is that all Anabaptists are heirs of Thomas Müntzer and the Zwickau prophets. Karl Holl, who sees this radicalism as an aberration from Luther's Reformation, is an eminent modern advocate of this theory.[3] He rejects Troeltsch's distinction between the "Anabaptists" and the "spiritualists."[4] All were Schwärmer and "spirit" motivated. There were, to be sure, examples of encounter and some involvement between the evangelical Anabaptists and the chiliastic and revolutionary sectarians, but we still await demonstrable proof that the main-stream Anabaptists owe their source, or were substantially influenced, by the radicals of Saxony.

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[1] Köhler, "Wiedertäufer," op. cit., p. 1918.

[2] Cf. Robert Kreider, "Anabaptism and Humanism," MQR, XXVI (April, 1952), pp. 123-41.

[3] Karl Holl, "Luther und die Schwärmer," Luther, Vol. I, Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1921), 420-67.

[4] Ibid., p. 424, n. 1.

It is the contention of this writer that whereas humanism and other influences discussed above may have contributed to the rise of the Anabaptists, the sources of the movement can be found in more obvious places. The Anabaptists, like other Protestants, owe a profound debt to Roman Catholicism for their theistic views, including the divine inspiration and authority of the Scripture.[1] Of even greater importance, the Anabaptists are children of the Reformation. They were warmly appreciative of the contribution of the great Reformers to their spiritual awakening and found themselves in basic agreement with the Reformers on the major theological issues. Ulrich Zwingli testified that on central questions of doctrine he and the Anabaptists were in unity.[2] In fact the Anabaptists had reasonable grounds to feel that their own views of a radical discipleship and believers' church had been shared by the Reformers in the early years and then abandoned.[3] The Anabaptist criticism of the Reformers was that they had surrendered their earlier vision and become bogged down half-way between Catholicism and the realization of a New Testament Christianity.[4] Finally, the Anabaptists are debtors for their views not only to Roman Catholicism and to the Reformers, but also to the Scripture which they studied with avid devotion. The Anabaptists emerged in Switzerland out of upper-room groups meeting regularly for Bible study.[5] They endeavored to bring all of life into conformity with the "will of God" as they understood it from their earnest searching of the Scripture. This fresh new encounter with the Bible was a prime source of Anabaptist thought and practice.

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[1] Wenger, "The Doctrinal Position of the Swiss Brethren as Revealed in their Polemical Tracts," op. cit., p. 65.

[2] ZW, III, 872.

[3] Wilhelm Hadorn, Die Reformation in der deutschen Schweiz (Frauenfeld: Huber and Co., 1928), p. 104.

[4] Bender, "The Anabaptist Vision," op. cit., 74-78.

[5] Cf. Emil Egli, Die St. Galler Täufer (Zurich: Friedrich Schulthess, 1887), pp. 12-15.

The evangelical Anabaptists originated in Zurich in 1525. In the early twenties a group of young disciples--Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and others--congregated around the rising reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, and listened devotedly to his exposition of the new Reformation teachings. In 1523, Grebel, Manz, and other colleagues grew increasingly impatient with Ulrich Zwingli's caution and his hesitation to abandon completely the state church pattern of Christianity.[1] This led to estrangement and eventual open conflict between Zwingli and the young radicals. The complete break came in January 1525 at Zurich when a small circle of friends under the leadership of Conrad Grebel covenanted together to form a new church and sealed their commitment with a simple baptismal service in which Grebel baptized one George Blaurock and Blaurock baptized the others.[2]

> Thus they together dedicated themselves to the name of the Lord in the high fear of God. Each ordained the other to the service of the Gospel, and they began to teach and keep the faith. Therewith was separation from the world and its evil works begun.[3]

Thereafter the young devotees to the new Anabaptist cause were harried men, repeatedly imprisoned, but aggressive in their missionary activity.

Anabaptism found an amazing receptivity among those considered to be the earnest Christians.[4] Professor Fritz Blanke describes this movement in the vicinity of Zurich as "a sudden religious awakening, in which not only a few individuals, but a large number [were] powerfully seized by a personal Christian conviction of repentance, culminating in the joy of salvation."[1] Initially Anabaptism was an urban movement spreading rapidly through the commercially active and intellectually alive Swiss and South German towns. Anabaptism appealed at first not only to the artisan classes of the towns, but obtained substantial numbers of converts from among the clergy, commercial and patrician classes, and even a few among the nobility. The chronicler Sebastian Franck in 1531, six years after the rise of the movement in Zurich, wrote:

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[1] *ZW*, II, 783-84.

[2] A. J. F. Ziegelschmidt (ed.), *Die älteste Chronik der Hütterischen Brüder* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cayuga Press, 1943), pp. 46-48.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

[4] Johann H. Ott(ius), *Annales anabaptistici . . .* (Basel: Johann Werenfels, 1672), p. 55; Heinrich Bullinger, *Von dem vnuerschampten Fraefel ergerlichem Verwyrren/ vnnd vnwarhafftem Leeren der Selbsgesandten Widertoeffern . . .* (Zurich: Christoph Froschauer, 1531), p. 4b; Joachim von Watt (Vadian), *Deutsche Historische Schriften*, ed. Ernst Götzinger (St. Gall, 1879), III, 408.

> The Anabaptists spread so rapidly that their teaching soon covered the land. . . . They soon gained a large following, and baptized thousands, drawing to themselves many sincere souls who had a zeal for God. . . . They increased so rapidly that the world feared an uprising by them though I have learned that this fear had no justification whatsoever.[2]

In the decades following 1525 three major geographical areas were swept by the Anabaptist movement: Switzerland and South Germany, the Netherland and Northwest Germany, and the Hapsburg lands to the East. Brilliant as was the success of the Anabaptist movement during the first several decades, the movement was substantially crushed by the middle of the sixteenth century. The first martyr to the Anabaptist cause was Eberli Bolt who was burned at the stake in Schwyz on May 29, 1525.[3] At the Diet of Speyer in 1529 the death penalty was decreed for any who did not present their children for baptism. Thus the Empire added its benediction to a fierce wave of persecution, which gave the Anabaptists probably the largest number of martyrs of any religious group in early modern history.[4]

Some persecution can heighten the morale of a movement but unremittent, intense persecution can in time break the back of a movement. So it was with Anabaptism. The fate of the Anabaptists differed in the three major geographical areas. Persecution subsided earliest in the northern provinces of the Netherlands where after a bloody oppression the Anabaptists were granted a limited degree of toleration as early as 1579.[1] In Holland the Anabaptists came to be a respected middle class group, known as "Mennonites"--a name derived from their early leader, Menno Simons. To the East in Moravia the Anabaptists, under the able leadership of Jacob Hutter, developed a communistic pattern of community life and were known as "Hutterian Brethren." The Anabaptists enjoyed their "golden era" in Moravia during the latter half of the sixteenth century. Then came the scourge of persecution and mass expulsions. By the time of Maria Theresa only a handful persisted in the lands of the Hapsburgs. In the Swiss-South German sector the early Anabaptist leadership had virtually all been killed off by 1555. Under persecution some had abandoned their new-found faith. Many of the farmer Anabaptists of the upland valleys did cling to their faith, but sought to isolate themselves from the hostile world. The early aggressive missionary spirit gave way to quietism and social exclusiveness.

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[1] Fritz Blanke, "The First Anabaptist Congregation: Zollikon, 1525," MQR, XXVII (January, 1953), 25-26.

[2] Franck, op. cit., p. ccccxliiiib. [3] ZW, VIII, 336.

[4] Jones, Studies in Mystical Religion, p. 392.

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[1] N. van der Zijpp, "Niederland," ML, III, 230.

# CHAPTER III

# LEGAL SUPPRESSION BY THE CONFEDERATION AND THE EMPIRE

The town or principality which embarked on a policy of legal suppression of the Anabaptist movement was generally impelled to undertake such action less by the dictates of the Empire or the Confederation than by the purposes and exigencies found in the local situation. The resolutions of the Swiss Diet were not legally binding upon a member of the Confederation except when they were predicated on specific commitments in Confederation covenants. The imperial mandates and recesses enjoyed a more authoritative legal status than the resolutions of the Confederation, but the princes and free imperial cities complied with imperial law only in so far as that law conformed with their respective interests and in proportion as the imperial authority made its power immediately felt. It is the purpose of this chapter to survey the political structure of the Swiss Confederation and, somewhat more briefly, that of the Holy Roman Empire and to examine the decisions of these two institutions as pertaining to the Anabaptist movement.

## The Swiss Confederation

The Swiss Confederation emerged as the Holy Roman Empire declined. The Confederation began as a voluntary union of small communities which had a common hostility to Hapsburg rule. The nucleus of the Confederation consisted of the three original Forest Cantons--Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden--which on August 1, 1291, joined in an "Everlasting League" (Ewige Bund).[1] The Confederation numbered ten full members in 1499 when the Peace of Basel concluded the Swabian War between the Confederates and the armies of Emperor Maximilian.[1] The treaty of peace established the practical separation of Switzerland from the Empire. The Emperor conceded to the ten cantons then constituting the Confederation complete exemption from imperial taxation and jurisdiction. Even before the war the Confederates had rendered no military service to the Empire, paid no imperial taxes, and obeyed neither the recesses of the Diet (Reichstag), nor the mandates of the Emperor, nor the judgments of the Imperial Court of Chancery.[2] However, many vexatious conflicts ensued after the Peace of Basel for those cantons like Basel, Schaffhausen, and Appenzell, which were not yet members of the Confederation in 1499, and for the smaller towns and principalities allied with the Confederation. Basel and Schaffhausen, as it will be seen, continued to receive on occasion imperial mandates and instructions. It was not until the Peace of Westphalia that the Confederation received formal recognition as an independent European state.[3]

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[1] A copy of the pact is to be found in Wilhelm Oechsli, Quellenbuch zur Schweizergeschichte (Zurich: Friederich Schulthess, 1886), No. 17.

Thirteen cantons were members of the Confederation on the eve of the Reformation. These cantons observed a carefully prescribed order of precedence, determined partially by the canton's date of entry into the Confederation and partially by its relative strength. Zurich headed the list, followed by Bern, Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden (including the half-cantons of Obwalden and Nidwalden), Zug, Glarus, Basel, Fribourg, Solothurn, Schaffhausen, and Appenzell.[4] The thirteen cantons consisted of the "rural districts" of Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Zug, Glarus, and Appenzell and the "towns" of Zurich, Bern, Lucerne, Basel, Fribourg, Solothurn, and Schaffhausen. The rural cantons practiced a primitive form of democracy in which all the adult male citizens of the canton met in an assembly (Landesgemeinde) to legislate and elect cantonal officers. Actual authority in these rural cantons rested, however, with a ruling caste of well-to-do farmers, who were also often the recipients of foreign pensions.[1] In the town cantons a restricted portion of the citizens had a voice in public affairs. The seat of power was the Small or Inner Council (Kleine Rat), generally composed of wealthy merchants, guild masters, and the old landed nobility--an oligarchical and aristocratic institution. A larger representation of the citizenry was found in the Great Council (Grosse Rat), which, however, was usually dominated by the Small Council. On matters of great community import both councils met to deliberate in joint session. Electoral procedures were complex and restrictive. Some councils were self-perpetuating, electing replacements to vacancies in their ranks. Often elections were limited to members of the guilds or simply the guild masters or members of certain privileged guilds.

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[1] For a copy of the treaty see ibid., No. 98.

[2] Wilhelm Oechsli, History of Switzerland, 1499-1914 (Cambridge: University Press, 1922), p. 14.

[3] For a copy of Article 6, granting the Confederation "complete freedom and exemption from the Empire," see Oechsli, Quellenbuch . . ., No. 155.

[4] Oechsli, History of Switzerland, p. 17.

The town cantons had all acquired jurisdiction over large or small areas beyond their city walls. The town, as the "prince," ruled these country regions as subject districts, the authority of the town council ("Myne gnädigen Herren") being represented in the rural locality by the bailiff or prefect (Landvogt), who was always a townsman.[2] The Landvögte were the instruments for the centralization of political power in the towns. They collected the taxes, including the much despised tithes and ground rents. They sought to suppress the historic local liberties. They conscripted men for military service. The rural people, as is to be expected, harbored a deep antipathy toward their rulers in the towns.

In addition to the thirteen cantons were a number of small principalities, towns and rural districts which were allied to the Confederation, but, as members of second rank, did not enjoy all the cantonal privileges.[1] These were known as "allies" (Zugewandte). Included among them were Valais, Graubünden, the town of St. Gall, the territory of the prince-abbot of St. Gall, and many others. In addition to the cantons and allies were the "common domains" or "common bailiwicks," areas which had been conquered or purchased and which as subject lands were ruled in common by two, three, or more cantons. Among these were the Freiämter in the Aargau, ruled by seven cantons, and the county of Baden, ruled by eight cantons.

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[1] Geschichte der Schweiz, edited by Hans Nabholz, Leonhard von Muralt, Richard Feller, and Edgar Bonjour (Zurich: Schulthess, 1932), I, 318.

[2] Ibid., p. 320.

The Swiss Confederation was a loose, motley organization--more a constellation of alliances than a federal state. It had neither a constitution nor a central government. Whenever it was necessary to deliberate and decide on common affairs, one of the cantons could summon the others to a meeting (Tagsatzung) at a designated place.[2] In so far as they were interested, the other cantons sent as many commissioners (Boten) as they wished, usually one or two. The meetings or diets convened in different places--in the Reformation years especially in Lucerne and Baden. They continued as long as the deliberations required, usually one to two days and rarely as long as a week. Often in the Reformation era they met as frequently as every fortnight. A wide variety of subjects was discussed at the meetings of the Swiss diets: problems of war and peace, conscription quotas, regulations for coinage, common measures to prevent pestilences, regulations against gypsies and vagrants, and so on. The Swiss diets exercised in a loose way legislative, executive, and judicial functions. In the deliberations the commissioners presented not their own views but the attitudes of their respective governments. If the commissioners were unanimous or approached unanimity in their discussions, these decisions were usually then implemented by all the participating cantons. If there was disagreement, then decision was postponed so that the commissioners could obtain new instructions from their respective governments. The commissioners were, therefore, little more than messengers for the cantonal governments. Except for commitments made in the confederation covenants, no canton legally could be forced to comply with decisions of the Swiss Diet. All efforts to establish the principle of majority rule were resisted by the large and powerful cantons of Zurich and Bern.[1] Many of the diets were attended by only a few cantons who shared a concern about specific common problems. For example, the five militant Catholic cantons--Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Zug, and Lucerne--frequently held their own diets at Lucerne, while the evangelical cantons often met at Aarau.[2]

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[1] Oechsli, History of Switzerland, pp. 19-20.

[2] Emil Egli, Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte (Zurich: Zürcher und Furrer, 1910), I, 4.

During the years from 1525 to 1532 the Anabaptist issue entered into the discussions of the various Swiss Diets on at least twenty-eight occasions.[3] Often, however, when the Anabaptist problem was discussed it received only very slight attention. The most significant example of a corporate approach to the punishment of the Anabaptists was the Concordat of 1527 among the cities of Zurich, Bern, and St. Gall. The authorities in Zurich were determined not only to suppress the Anabaptists in their own territory but also to arouse the other evangelical cantons to take similar vigorous action. They recognized that the Anabaptists could not be suppressed in one locality without joint action in neighboring territories. On August 2, 1527, the Council of Zurich, undoubtedly on the instigation of Zwingli, invited the evangelical-inclined governments of Bern, Basel, Schaffhausen, Chur, Appenzell, and

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[1] *Geschichte der Schweiz*, I, 326. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 325.

[3] *Die Eidgenössischen Abschiede aus dem Zeitraume von 1521 bis 1528*, Vol. IV, *Part 1a of Amtliche Sammlung der ältern Eidgenössischen Abschiede*, ed. by Johannes Strickler (Brugg: Fisch, Wild und Co., 1873), Nos. 276, 285, 289, 307, 344, 348, 442, 470, 480, 503, 573; *Die Eidgenössischen Abschiede aus dem Zeitraume von 1529 bis 1532*, Vol. IV, *Part 1b of Amtliche Sammlung der ältern Eidgenössischen Abschiede*, ed. by Johannes Strickler (Zurich: J. Schabelitz, 1876), Nos. 207, 248, 251, 270, 322, 342, 387, 395, 406, 410, 419, 433, 435, 444, 464, 526, 717.

St. Gall to send delegates to a conference to be convened on August 11 at Zurich where common measures would be considered for the eradication of the Anabaptists.[1] Judged by Zwingli's correspondence in this period,[2] and by the wording of the concordat, it would appear that Zwingli was the architect of this legislation.

In the letter of invitation the council admitted that even the severest measures had failed to curb the movement in the Canton of Zurich and that it had learned of the continuous growth of Anabaptism in other territories.[3] The council charged further that the Anabaptists "corrupted and devoured not only the true, orthodox inner faith of the Christian heart but also the external order of men, the Christian laws, and the established magistracy." Anabaptism violated the dictates of brotherly love, undermined the good customs of the past, and destroyed the general peace and order of society. Appealing in behalf of "Christian peace and the fatherland of our Confederation," the Council of Zurich urged immediate common action against the Anabaptists. Zurich, Bern, Basel, Schaffhausen, and St. Gall sent representatives to the conference. Appenzell apparently did not respond. Chur explained that she was not troubled with Anabaptists.[4]

The representatives deliberated in Zurich for three days, August 12 to 14. The three governments of Zurich, Bern, and St. Gall agreed upon and signed the concordat on August 14, 1527. Basel and Schaffhausen declined to be parties to the agreement. This document consists principally of two sections: first, a catalog of the many indiscriminate charges leveled against the Anabaptists--from fornication and fratricide to communism and refusal to serve in public office; and, second, a list of common measures for the punishment of Anabaptists.[1] Among the specific penalties agreed upon for the purpose of "rooting out this unchristian, malicious, offensive, seditious weed" were the following: (1) Whoever is suspect of the vice of Anabaptism will be summoned before the authorities, instructed concerning the punishments, and admonished faithfully and earnestly to desist. (2) In order to bring to light this suspicion, every citizen is bound by his oath of loyalty to inform the authorities of anyone suspected of Anabaptism. (3) Whoever openly belongs to this sect and refuses to amend his behaviour and desist from such activity, is subject to torture and punishment by the authorities. (4) Foreign Anabaptists are to be banished. A foreigner is defined as one who is born outside the jurisdiction of the cities and cantons adhering to this agreement. (5) Whoever is banished and in violation of his oath returns, shall be drowned without mercy. (6) Citizens and residents who again become tainted with Anabaptism shall pay a double fine. (7) Whoever persists in his error, becomes a preacher or leader of the sect, or, having sworn to abstain from the movement, backslides, shall also be drowned. (8) Anabaptists should not absent themselves from communion; they shall observe it with the other people in their local church. (9) Since many innocent persons are enticed by the hypocritical doctrine of the Anabaptists, the governments reserve the right to modify the punishments according to circumstances. (10) If an Anabaptist flees from one of the regions bound by this agreement to another, he shall not be spared, but shall either be banished or extradited. (11) If neighboring cities or rural districts wish to join the original signers of the concordat, they may do so at any time. The relation of the several cantons to the Concordat of 1527 will be examined in subsequent chapters.

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[1] Die Eidgenössischen Abschiede . . . 1521 bis 1528, No. 470, p. 1140.

[2] Cf. ZW, Vol. IX, Nos. 638, 639, 641.

[3] Die Eidgenössischen Abschiede . . . 1521 bis 1528, No. 470, p. 1140.

[4] Ibid.

No further major action against the Anabaptists was taken by the Confederation until 1530. In a conference of January 10, 1530, attended by representatives of Zurich, Bern, Basel, St. Gall, and Constance, it was agreed that the "miserable sect of Anabaptists" was becoming increasingly dangerous and in certain areas was "seizing the upper hand."[1] The conference agreed that the commissioners should seek immediate instructions from their respective governments as to how the Anabaptists should be brought under control. All were requested to bring to the next conference copies of all mandates against the Anabaptists in order that a common mandate might be prepared. It appears that there was no early follow-up of these plans. From January to November 1530 there were eight meetings of Swiss Diets where local problems pertaining to the Anabaptists were discussed, but no common action was agreed upon until a meeting of the diet on November 17, 1530.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 1140-43; a copy of Section II of the concordat, the section which outlines the penal measures, is reproduced in Appendix I of this volume.

All thirteen cantons were represented at the Swiss Diet of November 17, 1530, in Baden where it was decided that Anabaptists in all regions of the Confederation were to be punished vigorously.[2] Anabaptist preachers were to be arrested and "punished with severity in body and property according to their deserts." All those who attended Anabaptist services or provided housing, board, and assistance to Anabaptist preachers were to be punished with confiscation of property and imprisonment. The purpose, it was explained, was to compel people to "yield up such unchristian foxes." All Landvögte and officials in allied districts were commanded to implement the provisions outlined. This decision of November 17 was the first action taken by all thirteen cantons to suppress the Anabaptist movement.

The Swiss Diet, attended by commissioners from all cantons, met at Baden, May 10-16, 1532, where again it was agreed that Anabaptists should be severely punished. The diet decided that each canton and district should punish the Anabaptists in its territory according to their respective deserts. In the common bailiwicks the Landvogt should allow people versed in Scripture to counsel with them and repulse their errors. Those who would not abjure their Anabaptism were to be drowned without trial "in order that court costs might be saved."

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[1] Die Eidgenössischen Agschiede . . . 1529 bis 1532, No. 251, pp. 504-5.

[2] Ibid., No. 433, p. 842.

[3] Ibid., No. 717, p. 1339.

The five Catholic cantons of Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, and Zug declared on June 10, 1532, that they wanted to exclude from the diet further proceedings at law against the Anabaptists.[1] The evangelical cantons, more immediately threatened by the growth of Anabaptism, had always been the most concerned that suppressive measures be undertaken. The Catholic cantons no doubt welcomed the sight of religious dissension in the Protestant cantons and, therefore, refused to collaborate in a policy of persecution. The Swiss Diet appears not to have taken any major formal action against the Anabaptists again until November 10, 1544.[2] One of the last important decisions of the diet concerning the Anabaptists came on June 8, 1567, when drowning was ordered for all backsliders and those who refused to recant.[3] The Landvögte were ordered to carry out the provisions of this decision with scrupulous detail. The commissioners were asked to bring information to the next diet whether the orders had been executed and whether any Anabaptists remained.

Although the decisions of the Swiss Diet did not have compelling legal authority for member cantons unless they gave their free assent, the decisions of the diets undoubtedly exerted some moral force upon members of the Confederation. It is difficult, however, to evaluate how that influence concretely affected the several programs of persecution. Zurich seems to have taken the initiative in most of the efforts to use the agency of the Swiss Diets for the suppression of Anabaptism.

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[1] Christian Hege, "Mandate," ML, III, 6.

[2] Ibid., p. 7.

[3] Cornelius Bergmann, Die Täuferbewegung im Kanton Zürich bis 1660, Vol. II of Quellen und Abhandlungen zur schweizerischen Reformationsgeschichte (Leipzig: M. Heinsius Nachfolger, 1916), pp. 44-45.

## The Holy Roman Empire

In the Reformation period the Holy Roman Empire was an infinitely complex organism comprising numberless political units. For the purposes of this study it is necessary to identify only those institutions of the Empire which were instrumental in effecting the suppression of the Anabaptists.

At the summit of the imperial pyramid was the Emperor, who throughout the long period from 1519 to 1556 was the Hapsburg Charles V. Within certain constitutional limits the emperor could issue mandates which were authoritatively binding upon the princes, knights, and cities of the Empire. In 1521 an Imperial Regency (Reichsregiment) was established, which was to have independent administrative power during Charles V's periods of absence from the Empire.[1] At other times the Reichsregiment was to be a mere advisory body and at all times crucial decisions required the assent of the Emperor. Despite Charles' many long absences from his imperial lands, the Reichsregiment declined in influence and after ten years disappeared.[2] Legislative authority was vested in the diet (Reichstag) which met at irregular intervals. The diet, retaining its medieval characteristics, was divided into three chambers or colleges, in the first of which sat the electors, in the second the princes of the Empire (Reichsfürstenrat), and in the third the representatives of the free imperial cities.[3] Internal rivalries and jealousies impeded the legislative processes of the diets. Often the diet delegated the task of drafting legislation to a committee or deputation. A legislative act passed by the diet, upon receiving the Emperor's assent, was proclaimed the law of the Empire. This law was authoritative only in so far as the members of the diet, present or absent, freely assented to it.[1] A measure which passed the diet and received the approval of the Emperor was termed an imperial decree (Reichsschluss). In the recess following a diet all the Reichsschlüsse were collected and published together, this collection known as an imperial recess (Reichsabschied).[2]

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[1] A. F. Pollard, "National Opposition to Rome in Germany," The Reformation, Vol. II of the Cambridge Modern History, edited by A. W. Ward, G. W. Prothero, and S. Leathes (New York: Macmillan Co., 1904), p. 149.

[2] Samuel E. Turner, A Sketch of the Germanic Constitution from Early Times to the Dissolution of the Empire (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1888), p. 137.

[3] Ibid., p. 101.

Two mandates were promulgated against the Anabaptists in the name of Charles V, the first on January 4, 1528, and the second on April 23, 1529.[3] During the decade from 1521 to 1531 when Charles was absent from Germany, the force of imperial authority was brought to bear against the Anabaptists probably through the instigation of the Emperor's brother, Ferdinand I.[4] Having ruled the five Austrian duchies since 1521, Ferdinand knew through immediate experience that Anabaptism was a deeply rooted mass movement which he believed could only be crushed by ruthless coercion. Beginning with the issuance of a mandate on October 23, 1527, Ferdinand promulgated at least ten mandates against the Anabaptists in less than two years[5] and in addition dispatched numerous instructions to local officials to exterminate the Anabaptists.[6] In the lands under Ferdinand's rule the leaders among the Anabaptists were burned at the stake and the ordinary members, even though they recanted, were beheaded.[7]

The Reichsregiment issued a mandate on January 4, 1528, which condemned the Anabaptists in the broad, general terms so characteristic of all legislation and decrees against these dissenters.[8] It was declared that spiritual and temporal law and especially imperial law forbade rebaptism under pain of death. Rebaptism did not accord with the long-established Christian order and custom. This "damnable sect," disregarding the principles of Holy Scripture, had introduced many unchristian, dreadful, and unheard of articles and ordinances. Worst of all, the Anabaptists were destructive of the magistracy and the public peace and order. It was observed that a considerable number of people were actively associated with the Anabaptist movement. The penal provisions were couched in general terms. Princes and magistrates of the Empire were ordered to apply themselves vigilantly to the task of suppressing the Anabaptists, proceeding against those who persisted in error with such penalties as might be found necessary. By implication the imperial mandate demanded capital punishment. If the subordinate civil authorities failed in this task they would jointly and severally incur high displeasure and penalties from the Emperor. The clergy were also urged to use their offices to counsel, warn, and repulse the Anabaptists. This mandate was declared normative for all cities and principalities in the Holy Roman Empire. After the issuance of this mandate definite measures against dissenters became a matter not only of expediency, but of obedience to the expressed commands of the Emperor.

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[1] Ibid., p. 102.

[2] Ibid., p. 117.

[3] Copies of the two imperial mandates are to be found in the Appendixes II and III of this volume.

[4] Erich Meissner, "Die Rechtssprechung über die Wiedertäufer und die Antitäuferische Publizistik" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Göttingen, 1921), p. 26.

[5] Hege, "Mandate," ML, III, 6.

[6] Johannes Loserth, "FerdinandI," ML, I, 638-39.

[7] Hege, "Mandate," ML, III, 10.

[8] See Appendix II.

On April 23, 1529, during the sessions of the Diet of Speyer, a second mandate was issued in the name of Charles V which explicitly demanded the death penalty for Anabaptists.[1] The Mandate of 1529 repeated in much the same language as the earlier mandate the charges that the Anabaptists were destroying the civil and ecclesiastical order. It was noted with alarm that the movement was daily increasing in strength and gradually gaining the upper hand. Anabaptism was pictured not as a new movement, but as an ancient heresy which had been condemned and forbiddan by imperial law. The legal authorities preparing this mandate may have had in mind the Roman law ordained in the year

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[1] See Appendix III of this volume for a copy of the Mandate of April 23, 1529.

413 which forbade rebaptism under penalty of death[1] or the imperial edict of Frederick II in 1220 which condemned all heretics to death at the stake.[2] One of the interesting provisions of the Mandate of 1529 was a warning that the "inquisition of the ecclesiastical judges" was not to intervene in these proceedings against the Anabaptists. Following are the penal provisions which appeared in the mandate: (1) All Anabaptists and rebaptized persons, male or female, who were of an age of accountability, were to be executed by fire, sword, or similar methods, according to the circumstances of the person. (2) The "seditious agitators" and all those who persisted in the "abomination of Anabaptism" were absolutely not to be pardoned. (3) Those, however, who confessed their error, recanted, did penance, accepted their penalty, and begged for mercy, could according to the circumstances be pardoned. (4) Every one was required to have his children baptized in their youth according to Christian order, custom, and tradition. He who disregarded this order and persisted as though infant baptism was unimportant was to be considered as an Anabaptist and subjected to the above imperial regulations. (5) None were to be pardoned and exiled to another place, but were to be kept under the eye of the local authority, which was to assume diligent supervision that none of the converts backslid. (6) He who offered Anabaptists refuge or assistance, tolerated them, and failed to treat them strictly was subject to excommunication.

Imperial diets on at least seven occasions legislated against the Anabaptists. The first instance, and no doubt the most important, was the decree against the Anabaptists which appeared in the Imperial Recess of Speyer of April 22, 1529.[3] The decree of the diet repeated almost word for word the language of the imperial mandate which had been placed in the hands of the diet at least a week before its promulgation on April 23. The proposed legislation concerning Anabaptists was discussed in a series of sessions of the "Great Committee" and meetings of sub-committees.[1] Ferdinand apparently desired a decree more rigorous in its punishments--one which granted no reprieve from execution for those who recanted their Anabaptist faith.[2] The majority, however, thought the decree was "severe enough."[3] At this diet the Evangelical estates, which protested against the decision of the Catholic majority to enforce the Edict of Worms, stated in their protest that they considered the article against dissenters as altogether justified and proper.[4] Landgrave Philip of Hesse was the only prince who objected to this imperial law.[5] It behooved the Protestant estates to see that, in so far as possible, everything be done to repress those forms of Protestant radicalism which might bring down upon them the condemnation of the Catholic powers. To that end the interests of minorities were sacrificed. The Recess of April 22 and the Mandate of April 23 constituted throughout the Empire the fundamental legal basis for the persecution of the Anabaptists.

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[1] Hege, "Mandate," ML, III, 10.

[2] Hege, "Lateransynoden," ML, II, 624.

[3] See Appendix IV of this volume for a copy of the Imperial Recess of Speyer of April 22, 1529.

The Imperial Recess of November 19, 1530, of the Diet of Augsburg repeated the earlier charges against the Anabaptists and called for a continuation of the punishments ordered the previous year. Paragraph forty states: "Concerning the Anabaptists we leave matters as they are in the constitution and laws already issued, which we have here with the counsel and consent of the electors, princes, and estates again renewed, and command that children everywhere be baptized. . . ."[1] It was at the Diet of Augsburg that Melanchthon presented in behalf of the Lutheran party the famed confession of faith which was to be known as the "Augsburg Confession." This confession, which was read to the diet, contained five articles which referred to the Anabaptists.[2] The Anabaptists were condemned in the ninth article for their rejection of infant baptism and in the sixteenth article for their insistence that the magistracy, the secular order, and warfare were not Christian.

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[1] Cf. Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Kaiser Karl V, ed. Johannes Kühn (Stuttgart: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1935), Half Vol. I, Vol. VII, pp. 746, 761-62, 769, 870, 1143, 1297.

[2] Cf. ibid., p. 870.

[3] Ibid., p. 769.

[4] D. Julius Ney, Die Appellation und Protestation der Evangelischen Stände auf dem Reichstage zu Speier 1529, No. 5, Quellenschriften zur Geschichte des Protestantismus (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung [Georg Bohme], 1906), pp. 44, 75.

[5] W. Wiswedel, Bilder und Führergestalten aus dem Täufertum (Kassel: J. G. Oncken Nachfolger, 1930), II, 18.

At the imperial diet which met at Frankfurt-on-the-Main in 1531 a feeling of disquietude was spreading among many over the severity of the death penalty contained in the Speyer decrees.[3] Brandenburg and Nuremberg proposed changes in the law, but the majority favored no alteration in the punishments. Permission, however, was granted in special cases to relax the rigor of the penalties. The decree sought carefully to explain that the Anabaptists were punished, not for their faith, but for their transgression of imperial law.

The revolutionary events in Münster in 1534 and 1535 put an end to any conciliatory moves toward the Anabaptists. The revolution aroused the Diet of Worms in 1535 to condemn the "damnable teachings" of the Münsterites and the tyranny of their king, John of Leiden, and to offer aid in bringing the revolutionaries to justice. All sixty paragraphs of the recess breathe this spirit of anxiety and hostility toward the Münster revolution.[4] Paragraph forty-two provided that if a government were not sufficiently able to handle the Anabaptist problem, "then it is the duty of neighboring estates to render aid." Exempted from this duty were those governments which themselves were plagued with Anabaptists and required aid. The diet voted a sum for the siege of Münster sufficient to maintain a contingent of four thousand horsemen and twenty thousand infantrymen for a period of one and a quarter months.[1] In paragraph forty-four of the recess, which was entitled "Prevention of Future Sedition," it was stated: "In the name of the electors, princes and common estates, for the warding off of this damnable sect and for the prevention of further mischief, since the Anabaptists wander from one country to another, we have decided that neither electors, nor princes, nor common estates shall admit foreign, unknown persons into their realms as subjects and citizens without having first ascertained that they are not adherents of Anabaptism."[2] In addition to this plan to screen carefully all immigrants, the diet also ordered that "no writings, books, or other things which could promote this damnable sect of Anabaptism shall be printed or offered for sale, and the offenders shall be severely and immediately punished."[3] The universal alarm over the revolutionary events at Münster caused civil authorities throughout the Continent to increase the severity of their anti-Anabaptist measures and to introduce new and harsher punishments.[4]

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[1] *Herzogtum Württemberg*, ed. Gustav Bossert, Vol. 1 of *Quellen zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer*, Vol. XIII of *Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte* (Leipzig: M. Heinsius Nachfolger [Eger und Sievers], 1930), pp. 5*-6* (hereafter cited as *Q. Württ.*); Johannes Loserth, "Reichsgesetze gegen die 'Wiedertäufer'; Die Reichsabschiede als Quelle zur Geschichte der Taufgesinnten," *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter*, I, Nos. 1/2 (November, 1936), p. 28.

[2] *Documents Illustrative of the Continental Reformation*, ed. B. J. Kidd (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), Articles 5, 9, 12, 16, 17, pp. 263-66.

[3] Christian Hege, "Frankfurt am Main," *ML*, I, 678.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

In the Recess of the Diet of Speyer, June 10, 1544, it was recognized that the "dangerous and seductive sect of Anabaptism" was increasing throughout the Empire.[5] Apparently the governments were finding it difficult to get citizens to bring charges against the Anabaptists and some officials were most indifferent to their responsibilities to punish dissenters. Paragraph seventy-four of the Recess of Speyer reported that the Emperor and the estates had agreed to a modification of legal procedures pertaining to the Anabaptists.[1] It was a judicial short-cut which would facilitate their prosecution. Heretofore one person had had the duty of denouncing the Anabaptist and another that of prosecution. The new decree provided that when "the one who should denounce is negligent, then the prosecutor shall have the authority, even if the denunciation has not taken place, to seize them . . . and to proceed against them in accord with our constitution and law." The decree also commanded that all who were negligent in the denunciation of Anabaptists were to be punished. The decree provided for the persuasive as well as for the penal approach to dissenters: "First all the governments into whose hands such persons come, shall through its learned men and theologians apply every effort to dissuade them from their error and to convert them." Clergy who were tardy in this duty of condemning Anabaptism from the pulpits were to be duly punished.

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[1] Turner, op. cit., p. 139.

[2] Q. Württ., p. 6*; cf. Loserth, op. cit., p. 28.

[3] Q. Württ., p. 6*.

[4] Ernst Correll, Das schweizerische Täufermennonitentum (Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1925), p. 12.

[5] Q. Württ., pp. 6*-7*; cf. Loserth, op. cit., p. 29.

The Anabaptist was again a grave concern at the Diet of Augsburg of 1551. In the Recess of February 14, 1551, it was observed that in many places the Anabaptists were again gaining the upper hand.[2] This movement was deemed to be dangerous to the civil authorities, in part because the Anabaptists would not do homage nor swear fealty to the magistracy, and in part because they would not recognize the institution of the magistracy.[3] The diet complained that many subordinate officials were neglectful of their duties to suppress the Anabaptists.[4] All authorities were admonished to be more vigilant in their offensive because the Anabaptists "destroyed and undermined the common welfare, all good policy, natural and civil law, and all honor."

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Q. Württ., Paragraph 87, p. 7*.

[3] Ibid., pp. 7*-8*.

[4] Ibid., Paragraph 88, p. 8*.

Renewing the punishments of the Mandate and Recess of 1529, the diet decreed that "all and every Anabaptist of an age of accountability, who will not do homage and swear or refuse to acknowledge authority, shall be brought from natural life to death through fire, sword, or similar punishments."[1] Anabaptist preachers and agitators were never to be pardoned.[2] Those who persisted in their error and refused to recant or relapsed a second time to Anabaptism were to be harshly punished.[3] Under special circumstances the governments were permitted to pardon those who were sincerely repentant. Finally, the diet decreed that those officials who failed to implement rigorously the terms of this recess were to be removed from office and severely punished by fines or imprisonment.[4]

The Imperial Recess of Augsburg of September 25, 1555, decreed in paragraph seventeen that other confessions than the Catholic and Augsburg (Lutheran) were absolutely excluded from the Religious Peace.[5] Under the formula, "Cujus regio, ejus religio," the prince or magistracy was to choose the religion of the land and he had only two options: Catholicism or Lutheranism. This was the last of the general imperial recesses against the Anabaptists, except for the decree of the Diet of Augsburg on May 30, 1566, which again stated that "sects and erroneous opinions" were excluded from the Religious Peace of Augsburg.[6] Calvinists and Anabaptists alike were without legal status in the Empire.

It is difficult to assess how effective imperial mandates and recesses were in the whole movement to suppress the Anabaptists. Certainly there was an abundance of persecution of Anabaptists, including capital punishment, before the years 1528 and 1529. Some powerful German cities and principalities like Strassburg and Hesse were lax in their implementation of imperial laws.

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[1] Ibid., Paragraph 89, p. 8*.

[2] Ibid., Paragraph 90, p. 8*.

[3] Ibid., Paragraph 91, p. 9*.

[4] Ibid., Paragraph 94, p. 9*.

[5] Loserth, op. cit., p. 29.

[6] Q. Württ., p. 10*.

Some authorities like Ferdinand I in Austria went beyond the requirements of the mandates and recesses and sought to annihilate all Anabaptists. Although these mandates and recesses hardly can be said to have initiated a wave of persecution, they gave blessing and added legal authority to the penal measures instituted by the subordinate powers. In the numerous decrees and laws of the individual princes and cities of the Empire one finds a similarity of terminology which suggests derivation from the Recess of 1529 and the Mandates of 1528 and 1529. One may conclude that the imperial laws encouraged and strengthened those authorities who felt that conditions within their territories necessitated the persecution of the Anabaptists. Imperial law probably had only a slight influence upon Swiss cities in the determination of their policy toward the Anabaptists. Slight though that influence was, it encouraged Swiss authorities to pursue the Anabaptists with ruthless intensity.

# CHAPTER IV

## ZURICH

Zurich, like other members of the Swiss Confederation, was proud of her civic traditions and achievements. A free imperial city since 1218, Zurich had early been thrown upon her own resources. To obtain a counterbalance to the Hapsburgs, whose lands surrounded the city, Zurich concluded in 1351 an "Eternal Pact" (Ewige Bund) with the four Forest Cantons.[1] This Eternal Pact, which actually was a looser alliance than the name implies, projected the Confederation for the first time into an area beyond the tiny region surrounding the Lake of Lucerne. Despite some violent quarrels with her confederates, Zurich, from 1351 until her disastrous defeat in the second war of Kappel in 1531, maintained her role as the most powerful and commanding member of the Swiss Confederation.

Several factors contributed to the confidence with which Zurich statesmen pursued their external politics. The city possessed a sound and balanced economic structure. As a community of craftsmen, Zurich was the most important industrial center of Switzerland. Although her league with the Confederation diminished her export trade in Hapsburg lands, Zurich compensated for this loss by becoming the most important grain, salt, and iron market in eastern Switzerland.[2] She possessed not only industries and merchant enterprises, but she had sufficient agricultural resources to render her largely independent of food imports. Zurich also enjoyed the military advantage of a strategic central location which commanded the major routes of approach to the highlands. Zurich herself was a well-fortified city with a population within the city walls of seven thousand.[1] In time of war Zurich was always able to put into the field a large contingent of troops. For example, among the twelve thousand Swiss who fought in the Battle of Marignano in 1515 were three thousand men from Zurich.[2] Possessing a stable economy and plentiful manpower and enjoying strategic geographical advantages, Zurich's voice had a compelling note in the councils of the Confederation.

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[1] For a copy of the pact see Oechsli, Quellenbuch . . ., No. 32.

[2] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 241.

The citizens of Zurich took particular pride in their constitution which provided for a wider distribution of political power than found in most of the Swiss cities. As early as 1336 the wealthy merchants were compelled to yield greater representation in the city council to the artisan classes, as well as a wider franchise in the election of the guild leadership.[3] The constitution of the Reformation era was defined in the "Solemnly Sworn Contract" (Geschworne Brief) of 1498 which gave the predominance of political power to the guilds.[4] Zurich had two councils: the Small Council of twenty-four and the Great Council of two hundred and twelve.[5] The Small Council consisted of the guildmasters of the twelve guilds, six representatives of the guilds (Zunftratsherren) elected by the Great Council, three representatives from the Constaffel (the guild of the nobility and patricians), and three councilmen-at-large elected by the Great Council. The city had two Small Councils and two burgomasters, who alternated in service every six months. The government changed office on Christmas and St. John's Day, at which times the citizenry assembled and swore loyalty to the new regime.[1] The Great Council consisted of two burgomasters, the two panels of councilmen from the Small Councils, eighteen representatives of the Constaffel, and one hundred and forty-four representatives of the guilds (Zwölfer).[2] The Great Council was often referred to simply as "The Two Hundred" or "The Citizenry."

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[1] Egli, Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte, I, 38.

[2] Karl Dändliker, Geschichte der Stadt und des Kantons Zürich (Zurich, 1908), II, 256, cited by Bergmann, op. cit., p. 8.

[3] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 163-64.

[4] Egli, Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte, I, 38.

[5] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 323.

The Great Council was not merely an extension of the Small Council as in most cities of the time, but it was in Zurich an independent authority. A survey of the great sourcebook of the Zurich Reformation reveals that the Great Council shared in virtually all the decisions relating to the major problems of the day.[3] The Great Council decided upon questions of taxation, purchases of territory, bestowal of citizenship, treaties, war, and peace. It selected the burgomasters, eighteen of the members of the two Small Councils, commissioners to the Swiss Diets, administrative officials, and Landvögte. With the advent of the Reformation, the Great Council issued regulations covering all phases of the ecclesiastical and moral life of the community. Because of the ascendancy of the Great Council in city government and because of the preponderant authority of the guilds in the Great Council, Zurich did not have a ruling oligarchy like Basel nor a dominant aristocracy like Bern. Zurich lacked both a landed and a wealthy merchant aristocracy.[4] However, on the eve of the Reformation in the councils were members of one vested interest: those who received pensions from foreign governments for their support of the mercenary system--a system in which foreign powers, notably France, employed Swiss manpower to serve in their infantry.[5] They were inclined to resist the inroads of the Reformation. The artisan classes, on the other hand, were attracted very early to the new faith.[1] Ulrich Zwingli, working closely with the evangelical-minded guilds, used the agency of the Great Council to effect the early adoption of the Reformation.

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[1] Leonhard von Muralt, "Stadtgemeinde und Reformation in der Schweiz," Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Geschichte, X, No. 3 (1930), 356.

[2] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 323.

[3] Actensammlung zur Geschichte der Zürcher Reformation in den Jahren 1519-1533, ed. Emil Egli (Zurich: J. Schabelitz, 1879). This volume is hereafter cited as Akt. Zurich.

[4] Von Muralt, "Stadtgemeinde und Reformation . . . ," op. cit., p. 360.

[5] Ibid.

The Reformation in Zurich was preeminently the work of Ulrich Zwingli. He was born the son of a magistrate at Wildhaus in Toggenburg on New Year's Day 1484.[2] His studies took him to Basel, Vienna, and perhaps Paris. He had served for a decade as priest in Glarus and then from 1516 to 1518 as preacher at Einsiedeln. Zwingli distinguished himself as an eminent humanist. He was a friend of Erasmus. He exhibited strong political interest, first as a zealous partisan of the papacy and foe of the French. As a chaplain he accompanied the infantrymen of Glarus in the Italian invasions of 1513 and 1515. His Italian campaign experiences, coupled with Erasmian pacifism, caused him to become a fierce opponent of the whole mercenary and pension system. In the autumn of 1518 Zwingli applied and was accepted for the position of secular priest of the Great Minster in Zurich. He was selected for at least two reasons: (1) the majority of the canons of the Minster were of Erasmian persuasion and desired this famed humanist reformer; (2) Burgomaster Marx Roist and many of his colleagues on the councils were eager to have in Zurich this eloquent and forceful opponent of the pension system.[3] On New Year's Day 1519 he began his ministry in Zurich as an Erasmian reformer. Throngs streamed to the Great Minster to hear his vigorous expository preaching from the Gospels. Zwingli spoke out passionately on the burning issues of the day, directing his sharpest attack against the mercenary system. As a result of Zwingli's insistence, Zurich refused in May 1521 to join the other cantons in a pact on mercenaries with the French.[1] Beginning in the year 1519 a great inner transformation occured in his life. Luther's name had first entered into his correspondence in December 1518.[2] During a grave illness in September 1519 he had a profound religious experience which resulted in his conversion from an Erasmian reformer into an evangelical reformer.[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 363.

[2] Walther Köhler, "Ulrich Zwingli," Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, V, 2152.

[3] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 345.

Zwingli's preaching as a reformer bore its first demonstrable results in the period of Lent in 1522. The publisher Christopher Froschauer and several of his guests, apparently with the consent of Zwingli who was also a guest, broke the Lenten ordinance requiring abstention from meat.[4] The Bishop of Constance dispatched a mission to Zurich to demand punishment of the guilty parties. The Small Council, mindful of the Catholic bloc in Zurich and the attitude of the other members of the Confederation, was prepared to yield, but Zwingli and the Great Council insisted that the issue must be discussed before the Great Council. On the recommendation of Zwingli, the Great Council decided that the Lenten customs should continue to be observed, but the whole question was to be examined thoroughly by scholars in the light of Scripture.[5] This was the first important intervention of the Great Council in behalf of the Reformation. In the Lenten period of 1522 Zwingli had to choose between two alternative methods to inaugurate the Reformation: the first would have been to rely upon the spontaneous awakening of individuals and small groups who would have ushered in the Reformation by direct means wherever and whenever they were so motivated; the second approach was predicated on the conviction that the Reformation was to be effective for the total political and ecclesiastical community and therefore should be introduced in an orderly manner by the competent authorities.[1] The strategy of the second approach was that of winning the rulers to an acceptance of the reformation movement. Zwingli, following the second alternative, was prepared to make the Great Council the agency of the community for the reformation of the church. He was also tactically prepared to bow to council decisions adverse to his program. Thus, he accepted the decision of the council on June 22, 1523, to retain tithes despite his earlier publicly voiced opposition to the system.[2]

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 346.

[2] Beatus Rhenanus to Zwingli, Basel, December 6, 1518, _ZW_, VII, 114; cf. Zwingli to Beatus Rhenanus, Zurich, February 22, 1519, _ZW_, VII, 138.

[3] Köhler, "Ulrich Zwingli," _op. cit._, 2152.

[4] _Akt. Zurich_, Nos. 233-38.

[5] Egli, _Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte_, I, 236.

Zwingli, as the head priest at the Great Minster, conceived of himself as the spiritual shepherd of the total Zurich community.[3] He saw the church as in a state of dire emergency; the ecclesiastical authorities had failed to reform the abuses. Zwingli declared that the magistracy, as a member of the church, had a special responsibility to come to the aid of the church.[4] The magistracy, he urged, should summon a "free council" of the Christian Church where the disputed issues should be decided by reference to the Word of God.[5] The first disputation was held on January 29, 1523, when six hundred delegates were present to hear a debate on the question of the source or authority for Christian faith and life.[6] That day the Great Council decided that Zwingli was to continue without hindrance to preach according to the Scripture.[7] This demonstrated a deepening collaboration between the Reformer and the Great Council.

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[1] Von Muralt, Glaube und Lehre der Schweizerischen Wiedertäufer . . ., p. 11.

[2] Akt. Zurich, No. 368.

[3] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 353.

[4] Alfred Farner, Die Lehre von Kirche und Staat bei Zwingli (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1930), pp. 85-86.

[5] ZW, I, 484, 488.

[6] An English translation of the record of the first disputation is available in the Selected Works of Zwingli, pp. 40-171.

[7] ZW, Vol. I, Nos. 17, 18.

Following the first disputation small Bible study circles sprang up throughout the town and countryside.[1] Among the common people was to be found a lively demand for copies of the Scripture for private study.[2] That need was first supplied by the Basel publishers. Christopher Froschauer published his first edition of the German New Testament in 1524.[3] Among the leaders of the Bible study circles were young disciples of Zwingli who were subsequently to emerge as leaders of the Anabaptist movement. Andreas Castelberger, a bookseller, led a group in the study of the Gospels and the Epistles of Paul.[4] Felix Manz conducted a group in the study of the Old Testament from the Hebrew text.[5]

Zwingli was meanwhile using the freedom of the pulpit to attack Catholic ceremonialism: the mass, altar, images, candles, choir chants, and pilgrimages. Aroused to action by this preaching and by their own Bible study circles, some took steps to introduce immediate reforms. Wilhelm Reublin, priest at Witikon and subsequently an Anabaptist, was married in public on April 28, 1523--the first public wedding of a clergyman.[6] In September 1523 three men--including Laurenz Hochrütiner, later an Anabaptist--destroyed the crucifix at Stadelhofen, giving as their reason that "God, our Redeemer, has forbidden crucifixes and other images."[7] Death was the established penalty for such iconoclasm, but in this instance the three men were simply exiled from Zurich for two years.[1] The refusal to pay the tithe was one of the first indications of popular, spontaneous support of the Reformation.[2] The council sought to check this irregular method of reform with the issuance of a mandate in September 1523 requiring the continued payment of the tithe.[3]

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[1] *Geschichte der Schweiz*, I, 354. [2] Bergmann, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

[3] Adolph Fluri, "Froschauer Bibeln und Testamente," *ML*, II, 14.

[4] *Zürich*, Vol. I of *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz*, eds. Leonhard von Muralt and Walter Schmid (Zurich: S. Hirzel, 1952), No. 397, p. 387 (hereafter cited as *Q. Zurich*); cf. Egli, *Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte*, I, 89, n. 1.

[5] *Q. Zurich*, No. 124, p. 127; *Heinrich Bullingers Reformationsgeschichte*, eds. J. J. Hottinger and H. H. Vögeli (Frauenfeld: Ch. Beyel, 1838), I, 30; *ZW*, VII, 617.

[6] *Die Chronik des Bernhard Wyss, 1519-1530*, ed. Georg Finsler, Vol. I of *Quellen zur schweizerischen Reformationsgeschichte* (Basel, 1901), p. 25.

[7] *Akt. Zurich*, No. 421.

As the reformation spirit increased in Zurich a clarification was urgently required concerning the question of the mass and images. Therefore, a second disputation was arranged by the council beginning October 26, 1523. Fully nine hundred participated in this three-day debate.[4] There seems to have been general agreement with Zwingli that the mass and images should be done away, but there was disagreement as to when was the most favorable occasion for this action. Noting that the council was not yet ready to act, Zwingli with political astuteness declared that he was satisfied to leave the decision in the hands of the council. In the course of the second disputation occurred the first open breach between Zwingli and those young men like Conrad Grebel who within a year would be leaders of the Anabaptist movement. Before examining more closely this break and the rise of the Anabaptists, the continuation of Zwingli's reformation in its political setting should be sketched.

After the second disputation Zwingli and his aides went to the people, traveling from community to community preaching and teaching. Despite Zwingli's most vigorous efforts, opposition to his program of reform persisted among the influential elements concentrated in the Small Council. Adam Sprüngli, a councilman, asserted in October 1523 that there were no more than fourteen good Evangelicals among members of the Small Council.[5] The Great Council demanded and obtained the right in January 1524 to have all matters concerning "wrong preaching" referred to it rather than the Small Council.[6]

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[1] Akt. Zurich, No. 442. [2] Akt. Zurich, Nos. 380, 391, 392, 410.

[3] Bergmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

[4] The record of the second disputation is to be found in *ZW*, II, 664-803.

[5] Akt. Zurich, No. 434. [6] Akt. Zurich, No. 480, cf. No. 1254.

At Whitsuntide 1524 came the decision to abolish images.[1] At Easter 1525, with only a slight majority, the councils decided to abolish the mass and introduce the symbolical observance of the Lord's Supper.[2] Thus, six years after Zwingli's arrival in the city and three years after the Froschauer Lenten incident, the Zurich Reformation was consummated. To outsiders these developments appeared as unseemly rapid, even impulsive; to the Anabaptists, who had broken completely with the ancient order three months earlier, Zwingli's reforms seemed slow and indecisive--a Reformation of half measures.

Zwingli contended against three types of opposition in his struggle to realize his political-spiritual program:[3] (1) the Anabaptists, who Zwingli confessed were his most trying opponents; (2) the Catholics, especially the militant Catholic Cantons, against whom Zwingli's foreign policy was negatively oriented; (3) the liberal bourgeois including influential members of the Constaffel and the Small Council. As will soon be surveyed, extensive measures were taken to crush the Anabaptist movement. To assure the security of the Reformation, Zwingli sought to consolidate his power in the government. This was achieved through several constitutional changes. Late in 1524 when an outbreak of war with the Catholic cantons was anticipated, Zurich established a Secret Council which was endowed with full emergency authority in foreign affairs.[4] Gradually the Secret Council, which consisted of the burgomaster and three head guildmasters, took over the leadership of the state--secular and spiritual.[5] Although actually only the spiritual adviser to the Secret Council, Zwingli was the dominant personality in this council and thus the most powerful political figure in the community.[6] The chronicler Hans Salat described Zwingli as "the burgomaster, state secretary, and council all in one.[1] Additional constitutional changes robbed the liberal and Catholic forces of any remaining influence. On December 9, 1528, all Catholics were expelled from both councils and any councilman who did not attend the preaching services and communion was excluded from council membership.[2] In June the representation of the Constaffel was reduced in the councils.[3] The guilds, who were always ardent supporters of Zwingli's Reformation, were given a controlling voice in the war council in 1529.[4] Zurich was gradually transformed into a theocracy.[5]

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[1] Akt. Zurich, No. 544.

[2] Akt. Zurich, No. 684.

[3] Köhler, "Ulrich Zwingli," op. cit., p. 2153.

[4] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 369.

[5] Ibid., pp. 393-94.

[6] Farner, op. cit., pp. 123-24.

Step by step the state created the new church order. Less than a month after introduction of the Reformation on Easter 1525 the councils promulgated a new ordinance governing procedures of the divorce court, which stripped the Bishop of Constance of all judicial rights, transferring these rights to a new divorce court (Ehegericht).[6] The Ehegericht was composed of two clergymen, two members of the Small Council, and two members of the Great Council.[7] This court handled for the state not only divorce questions but regulated the stipends of the clergy and organized a kind of constabulary to police public morals.[8] Through the instigation of Zwingli the council summoned all the clergy of the canton to a synod in April 1528 where the Reformer sought to impose on the pastors and congregations a uniform doctrine and practice.[9] The theocratic rule was intensified in January 1529 when the council issued a mandate requiring everyone as a duty of citizenship to attend regularly the state church services.[10] It was also absolutely forbidden to attend Catholic mass in other cantons. In each of the years 1528, 1529, 1530, and 1531 the council, feeling responsible for the spiritual welfare of the citizenry, issued detailed regulations for the public conduct of the citizenry.[1] These Sittenmandate, especially the mandate of 1530, represent the high tide of the Zurich theocracy. After Zwingli's death on October 11, 1531, Zurich experienced a return to political normalcy.[2] Heinrich Bullinger, Zwingli's successor, was no theocrat. At the time of his election Bullinger insisted that the clergy must be free to preach, discipline, and even to criticize the secular government.[3] However, one observes that the magistracy continued after 1531 to issue mandates regulating the ecclesiastical order: the pattern of services, the conduct of the pastors and laity, and the content of preaching and instruction.[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 124.

[2] Heinrich Bullingers Reformationsgeschichte, II, 32.

[3] Von Muralt, "Stadtgemeinde und Reformation . . . ," op. cit., p. 376.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Farner, op. cit., pp. 123-29.

[6] Akt. Zurich, No. 711.

[7] ZW, IV, 183.

[8] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 358.

[9] Akt. Zurich, Nos. 1272, 1383, 1391.

[10] Akt. Zurich, No. 1536.

From the very beginning of his public career Zwingli had an absorbing interest in political affairs. He was a zealous patriot with a profound sense of responsibility for the temporal welfare of his native Switzerland and his adopted Zurich. One of the earliest and most famous expressions of his patriotic sentiment was the treatise he addressed to Schwyz in 1522: A Godly Exhertation to the Oldest Confederates in Schwyz, that They Should Guard Against Serving Foreign Masters.[5] In 1524, when a religious war was on the verge of breaking out between Zurich and the Catholic Cantons, Zwingli presented to the Council A Plan for a Military Campaign (Plan zu einem Feldzug) which was virtually a charter of his life's political ambitions.[6] Zwingli dreamed of and struggled to achieve a grand coalition of states which would extend from Venice to Denmark as a mighty bulwark against the Hapsburgs. He hoped that members of this coalition would be evangelically oriented. One cannot review here the development and contradictions in Zwingli's political philosophy, which has been carefully and sympathetically treated by Alfred Farner in his monograph, Die Lehre von Kirche und Staat bei Zwingli. "Human society," stated Zwingli, "is nothing other than the life of irrational animals."[1] In recognition of this state of affairs God has established the law, the judge, and the magistracy to punish the bad and protect the good. The magistracy is the "schoolmaster" of men.[2] He insisted that a Christian can best perform this function; therefore, a Christian must not withdraw from the duties of the magistracy. State and church were essentially two sides of one and the same community. The Bible, and especially the Old Testament, was expected to provide the constitutional laws upon which ecclesiastical, political, and social ordinances were to be founded.[3] With the guilds serving as the bridge between the congregation and the magistracy, the Great Council was the instrument of the spiritual community for the establishment of the Reformation and the continued administration of the church according to uniform and scriptural standards.[4] The Great Council, "where two or three gather together in my name," is a part of the Church of Christ. Although he never ceased to insist that the magistracy had "no power over the Word of God and Christian freedom" and "no one can be coerced to believe," Zwingli's actions on the political stage gave these noble declarations a hollow ring.[5]

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[1] Akt. Zurich, Nos. 1385, 1534, 1656, 1780.

[2] Von Muralt, "Stadtgemeinde und Reformation . . . ," op. cit., p. 377.

[3] Heinrich Bullingers Reformationsgeschichte, III, 295.

[4] Akt. Zurich, Nos. 1832, 1899.

[5] ZW, I, 155-88.

[6] ZW, III, 539-83; cf. Egli, Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte, I, 306-7.

The Anabaptist movement constituted a vigorous critique of the Zwinglian Reformation. The Anabaptists rejected what they considered to be a temporally and politically oriented type of Christianity. They spoke out against a civic religion which they thought was indifferent and complacent.

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[1] ZW, II, 488.

[2] ZW, II, 784.

[3] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 352.

[4] Farner, op. cit., pp. 119-20.

[5] Cf. ibid., pp. 97-98, 126.

## The Beginnings of Anabaptism

Anabaptism first publicly appeared on the Zurich scene in January 1525, grew rapidly in the rural districts, but was ruthlessly suppressed so that by the year 1529 only a remnant was left. The earliest anticipatory sign of Anabaptism came during the course of the second disputation of October 1523. Prior to that time Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and other nascent Anabaptist leaders had been among the most devoted disciples of Ulrich Zwingli. Son of a patrician family, trained abroad in the humanist disciplines, Conrad Grebel since his conversion in 1522 was considered to be one of the promising young leaders in the Zwingli circle.[1] He was a zealous, outspoken advocate of Zwingli's cause. Illustrative of his zeal was a letter Grebel wrote in 1523 to Joachim von Watt (better known as Vadian), in which he bitterly criticized the "Turks and tyrants" of the city council who failed to abolish the tithe system which Zwingli had taught was an abomination.[2] Another incipient Anabaptist was the bookseller, Andreas Castelberger from Chur, who had begun to conduct Bible classes as early as May 1522.[3] Castelberger is reported to have said much in these Bible classes concerning war: that the divine teachings vigorously condemned warfare, that war was sin, and that the mercenary soldier is no better in the sight of God than a murderer.[4] Others who were to become Anabaptist leaders, such as Simon Stumpf, Wilhelm Reublin, Ludwig Hätzer, Felix Manz, were in 1522 and 1523 ardent, although perhaps impatient, supporters of Zwingli.[5]

The rift between Zwingli and the advocates of immediate reform came on the second day of the disputation, October 27, 1523.[6] The Zurich clergy had advanced innumerable arguments to prove that the mass was an abomination and should be abolished.[1] When it appeared that the assembly would move on to discuss other subjects, Conrad Grebel requested that immediate steps be taken to instruct the priests to cease conducting the mass. Zwingli replied to Grebel: "My lords [the council] will decide whatever regulations are to be adopted in the future concerning the mass."[2] This statement so aroused Simon Stumpf that he declared:

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[1] Cf. Zwingli to Myconius, Zurich, August 26, 1522, ZW, VII, 568.

[2] Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, July 15, 1523, Q. Zurich, No. 2.

[3] Akt. Zurich, Nos. 262, 397; Q. Zurich, No. 397.

[4] Q. Zurich, No. 397, p. 387.

[5] Bender, Conrad Grebel, p. 87.

[6] Supra, p. 53.

> Master Ulrich, you do not have the right to leave the decision on this question in the hands of my lords, for the decision has already been made, the Spirit of God decides. . . . If my lords adopt and decide on some other course that would be against the decision of God, I will ask Christ for his spirit, and I will preach and act against it.

Undoubtedly Stumpf expressed the convictions of Grebel. These words were similar to those which Zwingli himself had expressed only four months before.[3] Zwingli responded to Stumpf with the frank admission: "That is right. I will also preach and work against [the mass and its retention]." The Reformer then added that the issue, however, was not whether the mass was Scriptural or not, but rather what was the best method and time for the abolition of the mass. To Conrad Grebel, Simon Stumpf, and their friends this was a clearcut clash of principles. They believed that Zwingli had abandoned the church to the domination of the state. Grebel referred bitterly to Zwingli's compromises as acts of "diabolical prudence."[4] He charged that in Zurich God's Word was "compromised, thrust back, fettered." Although not fully discernible to the actors in the drama, the issue which was taking shape was the ideological conflict between the established, territorial church of Zwingli and the free, gathered church of the Anabaptists.[5]

Zwingli testified several times that he and his colleague Leo Jud had received visits on numerous occasions during this early period from Conrad Grebel, Simon Stumpf, and Felix Manz who presented plans for a thoroughgoing reform of the church.[1] Zwingli stated that the brethren had begged him to abandon the state church pattern and to take the leadership in gathering a new church of believers "according to the Word of God." They were confident that the majority of the people would accept their program and that a large, united church, not a tiny splinter group, would be established. However, they recognized that even in communities which boasted of being Christian there were many who actually were not committed Christians. They urged Zwingli to make a public statement inviting the devout to declare themselves and to form a new church separate from the world. In the new brotherhood tithes and benefices were to disappear. Ministers were to be supported, not by tithes and benefices, but by the voluntary offerings of the brotherhood. According to Zwingli, this new gathered church was to establish a thoroughly Christian magistracy to replace the existing city council which was worldly and secular.[2] This idea of a Christian civil authority is a unique proposal, not found elsewhere in Anabaptist testimony and literature. Zwingli reported that he and Jud had rejected this whole plan of reform in a friendly spirit.[3] Heinrich Bullinger explained many years later that Zwingli had given as his principal reason for disapproving the program the following: "There are at this time many respectable people who do not oppose the Word, and for whom there is great hope, but who would by our withdrawal [from the established church] become indignant and recalcitrant."[4]

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[1] _ZW_, II, 671-784. [2] _ZW_, II, 784. [3] _ZW_, II, 503, 514-15.

[4] Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, December 18, 1523, _Q. Zurich_, No. 8.

[5] For a more extended comparison of these two church types see the article by the author entitled, "The Anabaptist Conception of the Church in the Russian Mennonite Environment," _MQR_, XXV (January, 1951), 19-20.

Grebel and his friends had by September 1524 abandoned all hope that the Zurich clergy would lead forth in the establishment of a free, gathered church.[1] They continued to meet at night for Bible study.[2] Affiliated with them was another circle centered around Jacob Hottinger in the nearby village of Zollikon.[3] The brethren were beginning to draw criticism from the pulpits, being railed at as "knaves" and as "satans in angels' clothing" (*Satanas in angelos lucis conversos*).[4] Rebuffed at home, they endeavored to establish contact with reformers who they hoped would be sympathetic with their cause: Müntzer,[5] Carlstadt,[6] and Luther.[7]

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[1] ZW, IV, 169, 171, 591; Q. Zurich, No. 120; Selected Works of Zwingli, p. 132; cf. Bender, Conrad Grebel, p. 103.

[2] Selected Works of Zwingli, p. 132; ZW, VI, 33; cf. Bender, Conrad Grebel, p. 255, n. 31.

[3] ZW, IV, 169.

[4] Bullinger, Der Widertöufferen vrsprung . . ., p. 9a.

One of the most illuminating documents of the Anabaptist movement is the letter which Conrad Grebel wrote on behalf of the brethren to Thomas Müntzer on September 5, 1524.[8] They had read with interest several of Müntzer's pamphlets and were encouraged to find that he stood up fearlessly to the authorities and that he advocated openly an unconditional obedience to Scriptural norms. However, they disagreed with him on questions of liturgy and warfare. The letter was, therefore, essentially one of admonition and instruction. No sooner was the letter written than they learned that Müntzer had urged armed violence against the princes. A postscript was thereupon appended admonishing Müntzer to cease from such notions and instead to be ready to suffer for the faith. Müntzer apparently never received the letter from the brethren.[9] In their letter they attacked the Zurich authorities for pursuing a policy of "false caution, hiding the divine Word, and mixing it with human wisdom." It was a criticism of the compromises and hesitancies in the Zurich Reformation and a condemnation of the magistracy's involvement in the affairs of the church. The Zurich brethren in effect urged that Müntzer should reject the broad, lax state church pattern and erect a heroic, gathered, disciplined church of believers: "It is more desirable that a few be rightly taught through the Word of God, believing and walking aright in virtues and customs, than that many believe falsely and hypocritically through adulterated doctrine." They asserted that all benefices and ancient customs would be purged from this brotherhood type of church. Benefices, they declared, were derived from interest and tithes, which were but forms of usury. A shepherd of the congregation should be supported by his flock. In addition to this appeal to break with the established church and return to the pristine pattern of the apostolic church, Grebel and his brethren urged that a Christian should disavow all coercion and war and should be prepared to suffer for the faith:

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[1] Cf. Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, September 3, 1524, *Q. Zurich*, No. 13.

[2] *Q. Zurich*, No. 124, p. 127.

[3] Bender, *Conrad Grebel*, p. 107.

[4] Grebel *et al.* to Thomas Müntzer, Zurich, September 5, 1524, *Q. Zurich*, No. 14, p. 20.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-21.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 21.

[8] For an abridged English translation of the letter to Müntzer see Bender, *Conrad Grebel*, Appendix IV, pp. 282-87.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

> The gospel and its adherents are not to be protected by the sword, nor are they thus to protect themselves, which, as we learn from our brother, is thy opinion and practice. True Christian believers are sheep among wolves, sheep for the slaughter; they must be baptized in anguish and affliction, tribulation, persecution, suffering, and death; they must be tried with fire, and must reach the fatherland of eternal rest, not by killing their bodily enemies, but by overcoming spiritual foes . . . . They use neither worldly sword nor war, for among them killing is done away with altogether.

One may observe that this nonresistance was based, not on Erasmian pacifism, but upon a conception of the suffering church.[1] The postscript, as indicated above, contained a sharp reproof against wielding the sword to usher in the Kingdom. They admonished Müntzer instead to have no fear of the threatening persecution. Acknowledging that the day of their persecution was near, they affirmed that they would accept it with patience and nonresistance. Grebel admitted in closing that their circle in Zurich was a tiny minority of twenty.

Beginning in September 1524 the conflict between the nascent Anabaptists and the Zurich authorities intensified. As so often happens in such struggles, the two sides were forced to do battle on terrain which they had not originally chosen: on the issue of baptism--infant versus believers' baptism. In the early years when he was testing all principles of Christian faith, Zwingli conceded that it would be preferable not to baptize children until they were of sufficient age to be able to confess their faith.[1] Infant baptism for Zwingli was at least an open question.[2] On the Anabaptist side there was no trace in Grebel's correspondence of an interest in the problem of baptism before September 5, 1524. Infant baptism, however, was thrust upon both parties as the issue. Zwingli and the authorities were compelled to defend infant baptism because a state-established, community-inclusive church logically required that all children should be inducted into the church at birth. The radicals on the other hand were compelled by the logic of their concept of the church as a free, separated brotherhood of individually committed Christians to insist upon adult or believers' baptism. As early as August 1524 several families in the village of Witikon, under the influence of the preaching of their priest, Wilhelm Reublin, failed to bring their children to be baptized.[3] Similarly three fathers in Zollikon refused to have their children baptized.[4] The matter was brought to the attention of the Zurich council which ordered that the infants should be baptized immediately and that those who withheld their children from baptism were to be levied the moderate fine of one mark.[5] Thus again an ecclesiastical matter had been decided by the magistracy and this decision backed by the sanctions of the state.

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[1] Zwingli in an earlier day had also given expression to this conception of the church as a remnant-brotherhood witnessing and suffering in a hostile world. See Zwingli's letter to Myconius, Zurich, July 24, 1520, ZW, Vol. VII, No. 151.

The issue was joined when the parents involved refused to comply with the demand of the Zurich council. They asserted that they would not permit their children to be baptized unless they could be convinced by Scriptural authority.[1] Granting the reasonableness of the request, the council ordered that the nonconformist parents should confer on the matter with three clergymen in the presence of four councilmen. Grebel reported on one such conference which seems to have been fruitless. Similarly a series of Tuesday evening discussions between the Zurich clergy and these incipient Anabaptists resulted in no agreement.[2] The brethren criticized the way in which Zwingli tyrannized these discussions and "choked the speech in our throats." Therefore, in a "Petition of Protest and Defense" Conrad Grebel, or perhaps Felix Manz, submitted a written defense of the view of the brethren on baptism and requested that the Zurich council require from Zwingli a written defense of infant baptism based on Biblical authority.[3] In the petition, which was probably presented to the council in early December 1524, the author appealed to the magistracy to accept a scriptural view of baptism which would permit the practice of adult baptism in Zurich. In the introduction the author denied categorically the accusation, obviously introduced to becloud the issue, that he was a seditious agitator. To refute this charge, he proceeded to explain from Scripture his views of baptism. In terms of practical action he exhorted the council to display courage and abolish this "abomination" of infant baptism as it had abolished other unscriptural practices. What the author probably meant was that the state should abrogate all civil sanctions buttressing infant baptism. The author denied the argument that the abolition of infant baptism and the introduction of believers' baptism would disturb the public order and peace. The author advocated that in this matter freedom be granted so that "the truth can be the truth." He begged that the council should not "stain its hands with blood" by using the police arm to persecute the opponents of infant baptism. The petition was concluded with a request for a written exchange of views on the question of baptism. The author thus wished to have the council intervene in the religious sphere for a two-fold purpose: (1) to provide for a free debate in writing on baptism and (2) to abrogate all civil sanctions which made infant baptism obligatory. It was an interesting instance of an Anabaptist desiring government action in the religious sphere for the purpose of ending government interference in that area.

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[1] ZW, IV, 228.

[2] ZW, III, 409.

[3] Q. Zurich, No. 11.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Q. Zurich, No. 12.

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[1] Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, December 15, 1524, Q. Zurich, No. 18.

[2] ZW, IV, 207, 257, 286; VIII, 37; cf. Bender, Conrad Grebel, pp. 128, 262, n. 114.

[3] Q. Zurich, No. 16. Grebel has traditionally been considered the author of this petition. Consult Bender, Conrad Grebel, pp. 129-30, 183-85, and H. S. Bender and E. H. Correll, "Conrad Grebel's Petition of Protest and Defense to the Zurich Council," Goshen College Record, Review Supplement, XXVII (January, 1926), 23-31. On the other hand, L. von Muralt and W. Schmid, the editors of Vol. I of Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz, attribute the authorship to Felix Manz. Consult Q. Zurich, p. 23, n. 1.

The accusation which was increasingly being leveled at the Anabaptist brethren was that they were not only dissenters in regard to certain ecclesiastical traditions but, much worse, also political seditionists. Ulrich Zwingli set the pattern for this new offensive against the Anabaptists with the publication in December 1524 of his polemical tract, Who Gives Cause to Uproar (Wer Ursach Gebe zu Aufruhr).[1] Zwingli charged that they were a badly distraught folk who did not know what they wanted and who consequently were dangerously disturbing to the public peace.[2] They absolutely rejected the magistracy, but then in the next moment they wanted the magistracy but denied that a Christian could be a public official. They "wanted to kill the seductive priests" and then they reversed themselves and wanted to permit free preaching. They disputed on the streets, in the shops, and in their "houses of battle." Zwingli forgot himself occasionally and admitted that the Anabaptists differed only on minor points. "If one looks into this matter closely," he stated at one place, "it is seen that you contend only for unimportant outward things."[3] This treatise, like Zwingli's subsequent polemical writings against the Anabaptists, was filled with broad, unsubstantiated, reckless charges. Implicit in his accusation of sedition were these more fundamental reasons: (1) he feared that the Anabaptists were undermining the authority of the magistracy by their successful defiance of the council: (2) he feared that if dissent grew it would play havoc with his plans for a new reformed state church order. Observing that Zwingli was sharpening his attack upon the vocal and bold Anabaptist group, Grebel confided to his brother-in-law, Vadian, on December 15, 1524, that Zwingli was writing about sedition and that "he will probably strike us." Again, as in the letter to Müntzer, there was that sense of foreboding that the day of "persecution and the sword" was nigh. He asked his friend "to pray for us in these perilous times."[1]

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[1] ZW, III, 374-469.  [2] ZW, III, 357-58.  [3] ZW, III, 406.

The struggle over infant baptism continued to become more intense. Jacob Hottinger of Zollikon interrupted the clergyman, Caspar Grossmann, to challenge his sermon in defense of infant baptism.[2] Grebel refused to bring his infant daughter to be baptized and thus violated the mandate of the council.[3] To put an end to this increasing controversy the councils ordered on January 17, 1525, that all those who favored or opposed infant baptism should appear before the Small and Great Councils for a public debate.[4] The disputation resulted in a decision by the councils that infant baptism should be retained and that further meetings of the brethren should be forbidden. The councils issued mandates on January 18[5] and January 21[6] which convey the impression that this was to be the final and definitive action which would completely end the problem. Among the provisions of the mandates were the following: (1) Families which had refused to have their infants baptized were granted eight days to comply with the order to baptize their children and if they persisted in their refusal, they were to be banished from the territory of Zurich with wife, child, and goods. (2) The brethren who were not citizens of Zurich--Wilhelm Reublin, Johannes Brötli, Andreas Castelberger, and Ludwig Hätzer--were commanded to leave the canton within eight days. (3) The brethren were forbidden to hold any more meetings or "special schools," as they were called. (4) Grebel and Manz were ordered to cease their "disputing and agitating." (5) There were to be no more disputations. If there were questions, they were to be addressed to the burgomaster or the three head guildmasters. (6) The citizens of Zollikon were ordered to replace a baptismal font which they had destroyed. About ten days later it was further decreed that baptism was not to be administered in private homes and "new-born infants were to be taken to the church and baptized by the priest."[1] Having heard that some priests had been preaching against the recent mandates requiring infant baptism, the council gave strict orders to local officers of the law to watch the clergy, arrest any who would so offend, and cast them in the Wellenberg prison.[2]

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[1] Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, December 15, 1524, Q. Zurich, No. 18.

[2] Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, January 14, 1525, Q. Zurich, No. 23.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Q. Zurich, Nos. 21, 22.

[5] Q. Zurich, Nos. 24, 25.

[6] Q. Zurich, No. 26.

These mandates, which were aimed at ending the problem of dissent, failed of their purpose. Zwingli seemed confident that the movement had been crushed, although he admitted that Grebel and a few colleagues had refused to yield to the demands of the magistracy.[3] Convinced that there was no hope of winning official toleration of their point of view, a group of the brethren meeting in the home of Felix Manz on the night of January 21, 1525, covenanted together to sever their last remaining ties with the old order.[4] Grebel baptized Georg Blaurock and Blaurock baptized the other brethren, each upon his confession of faith. Thus began the Anabaptist movement.

## The Movement Spreads in the Face of Mounting Opposition

The Anabaptist leaders found few converts in the town of Zurich where the artisan classes were devoted to Zwingli. They directed their energies instead to the countryside. Soon the movement was flourishing in the nearby village of Zollikon, the district of Grüningen, and in the highlands area (Oberland). In the first days of the new movement Grebel, Manz, and particularly Blaurock were active in going from house to house in Zollikon to disseminate their gospel. The village soon became such a nest of Anabaptists that the situation came to the attention of the authorities.[1] Sixteen persons reported that they had been baptized and declared that no "worldly power" could force them to renounce their faith, although they confessed that they would gladly obey the magistracy in all things that did not violate the Word of God. On February 7, 1525, Manz, Blaurock, and twenty-five persons from Zollikon[2] who had been baptized were apprehended by the authorities and imprisoned in a room of the Augustinian cloister.[3] A committee of three Zurich clergymen together with several councilmen were commissioned to examine the imprisoned and recommend action. All except the leaders, Manz and Blaurock, were released upon payment of a bond of one thousand gulden.[4] Ten days later Manz and Blaurock were brought to trial before the Zurich council.[5] Blaurock was released upon promising to keep the peace.[6] Manz was required to pay the costs of imprisonment and post a bond of one hundred gulden before he was released.[7] He was warned to desist from baptizing, administering communion, and other "secret practices," which might cause "great damage and shedding of blood." A week later the council again warned Manz that he would be promptly imprisoned if he violated the council's order.[8] In this manner--cautiously and with a minimum display of force--the Zurich council began to seek out and suppress the Anabaptist movement.

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[1] *Q. Zurich*, No. 35. [2] *Q. Zurich*, No. 34.

[3] Zwingli to Vadian, Zurich, January 19, 1525, *ZW*, VIII, 296.

[4] *Die älteste Chronik der Hutterischen Brüder*, pp. 46-48; cf. Bender, *Conrad Grebel*, pp. 137, 264, n. 3.

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[1] Cf. Q. Zurich, Nos. 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 37, 38; cf. Blanke, "The First Anabaptist Congregation: Zollikon, 1525," op. cit., pp. 17-33.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 30.

[3] Q. Zurich, No. 37.

[4] Q. Zurich, No. 38.

[5] Q. Zurich, Nos., 42a, 42b.

[6] Q. Zurich, No. 42e.

[7] Q. Zurich, No. 42c.

[8] Q. Zurich, No. 42d.

The small band of Anabaptist brethren, recognizing that their movement was now under the interdict of the magistracy, turned their attention to other cities and cantons where they hoped to obtain a more favorable reception for their message. Ludwig Hätzer headed for Augsburg.[1] Johannes Brötli left Zurich to do missionary work in the Klettgau, a region of Canton Schaffhausen.[2] Wilhelm Reublin went to the town of Waldshut on the Rhine where on Easter Sunday 1525 he baptized the leading priest, Balthasar Hubmaier, and sixty other persons.[3] Grebel, assisted by Manz, Brötli, and Reublin, visited Schaffhausen where they sought unsuccessfully to win to their cause the two leading clergymen, Sebastian Hofmeister and Sebastian Meyer.[4] Grebel traveled also to St. Gall[5] and Waldshut to pursue evangelistic activity.[6] Andreas Castelberger returned to his native Chur where he was an aggressive Anabaptist missionary.[7] Manz and Blaurock joined Castelberger later in the work in Chur.[8] The Anabaptist leaders were a fellowship of ardent missionaries.

The authorities were troubled with the continuously expanding Anabaptist movement in the country districts. They also had problems with the aggressive Anabaptist leaders. Andreas Castelberger, for example, wrote two letters--one a long, chatty one--to the "praiseworthy and Christian" magistracy of Zurich requesting that for the sake of his family and book business he be granted a second postponement of his expulsion.[1] He explained that he could not in good conscience take an oath, but that if he should violate the terms laid down by the council he would naturally be subject to civil, noble, or imperial punishment. The council, for the second time, granted a postponement of Castelberger's banishment.[2] Reports were coming to the council that Georg Blaurock had not left the canton after his release from prison as was commanded but was preaching to great numbers in Zollikon and countryside.[3] Among the new converts was the town watchman and jailer who was summoned before the Zurich council.[4] He was released upon giving a promise to keep the peace, but was dismissed from his public office.[5] The upsurge of Anabaptism in Zollikon led the council to issue on March 11, 1525, a decree consisting of the following provisions: (1) that all citizens of Zollikon should remain faithful to the established order; (2) that those who were imprisoned in the Augustinian cloister were to pay a fine of one silver mark; (3) that other Anabaptists, in so far as they were known, were to be imprisoned; (4) that those in the future who would be baptized should be exiled with their wives and children.[6] The burgomaster and several councilmen were commissioned to go to Zollikon to read the council's order publicly to the people.[7] This was followed with a council decision ordering the imprisonment of all Anabaptists.[8]

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[1] Christian Neff, "Ludwig Hätzer," ML, II, 226.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 36.

[3] Q. Zurich, No. 404.

[4] Q. Zurich, Nos. 36, 121.

[5] Johannes Kessler, Sabbata, eds. Emil Egli and Rudolph Schock (St. Gall: Fehr'sche Buchhandlung, 1902), p. 145 (hereafter cited as Sabbata).

[6] Q. Zurich, No. 113.

[7] Q. Zurich, No. 45, n. 1.

[8] Christian Neff, "George Blaurock," ML, I, 229.

Many Anabaptists from Zollikon and its environs were arrested and brought to trial sometime during the period from March 16 to 25.[9] The hearings gave evidence that Anabaptism was a vigorous, popular movement. One of the prisoners, Valentin Gredig from Savoy,[1] was cross-examined in detail about his views of the magistracy.[2] He declared that he was not opposed to the office of the magistracy, had no desire for its abolition, and in fact believed that man required the magistracy. He disclaimed that he and the other had ever thought of themselves as a special faction or sect. He asserted that he who is at home with God will not employ the sword. He denied that he opposed payment of interest and tithes, adding that a Christian gives to his neighbor that which he owes. The prisoners wrote a letter of comfort to the brotherhood in Zollikon in which they said: "Encourage one another and have fear for nothing, neither force nor sword, for God will be with you. . . ."[3]

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[1] Castelberger to the Council of Zurich, February 21, 1525, in F. Jecklin, "Zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer," Anzeiger für schweizerische Geschichte, VIII (1899), 327-30; Castelberger to the Council of Zurich, February 22, 1525, Q. Zurich, No. 45.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 45.

[3] Q. Zurich, Nos. 48, 50.

[4] Q. Zurich, No. 46.

[5] Q. Zurich, No. 47.

[6] Q. Zurich, No. 51.

[7] Q. Zurich, No. 52.

[8] Q. Zurich, No. 53.

[9] Q. Zurich, Nos., 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61.

The Anabaptists of Zollikon petitioned the Zurich council that safe conduct should be granted for several of their representatives to come and appear before the council to defend their faith in public debate.[4] The council, which had earlier closed the door on any further debate, agreed to a disputation on March 20.[5] The Anabaptists, however, were to appear one at a time before a panel consisting of six councilmen, the three principal clergymen, two schoolmasters, and several other officials. Following the disputation on March 25 the council issued a decision confirming the edicts of March 11 and 16.[6] It provided also that those who should recant were to be released upon payment of costs, a fine of one silver mark, and the swearing of an oath to keep the peace. Five foreign Anabaptists were specifically named for exile. The council ordered that Blaurock and his wife should be placed on a boat and sent to his native Chur where the authorities were to be informed of what a troublesome character he actually was.

The Zurich records are deceptively silent about the Anabaptists during the several months following the council's decision of March 25. Conrad Grebel had returned to Zurich after Easter 1525 and was compelled to keep his presence secret except from his brethren because of the danger of arrest. He wrote to his friend Andreas Castelberger in the latter part of May as follows: "I believe it is known that I am in my house and that I receive the brethren here. However I do not venture out in order to protect my asylum here against a possible imprisonment by Zwingli.[1] Grebel explained that he had planned to leave Zurich secretly at night with Felix Manz, but had abandoned these plans when his wife threatened to betray Manz. In a letter to Vadian on May 30, 1525, Grebel wrote that he anticipated an intensification of persecution for himself: "the loss of property and home, imprisonment, banishments, and death."[2]

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[1] Q. Zurich, No. 64.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 60.

[3] Q. Zurich, No. 61.

[4] Q. Zurich, No. 27.

[5] Q. Zurich, No. 62.

[6] Q. Zurich, No. 65.

Ulrich Zwingli, who viewed with great distress the growth of the Anabaptists, appropriated to himself the task of being their major literary opponent. In his *Commentary on the True and False Religion* (*De vera et falsa religione commentarius*), published in March 1525, Zwingli expressed his judgment with moderation: "They cause us difficulty only on account of questions such as these, whether infants or adults should be baptized and whether a Christian may be a magistrate. . . . Even if they had Scripture to support their views, these things should be decided by love."[3] By "love" Zwingli meant that these issues should be decided by the community and the instrument of the community's will was the Great Council. In May he published a major work on baptism and the Anabaptists, *Von der Taufe, von der Wiedertaufe, und von der Kindertaufe*, which was particularly directed against the vigorous Anabaptist movement in St. Gall.[4] He charged that "for the sake of an outward sign [baptism] they destroy all Christian peace."[5] The Anabaptists, he warned, disturb the public peace and destroy the bonds of unity and love in the community.[1] In a letter to Vadian, May 28, 1525, Zwingli complained that nothing had been accomplished in Zurich by the measures of suppression taken against the Anabaptists and that their vigor, determination, and power remained undiminished.[2] He charged, further, that for the Anabaptists baptism was only a "pretext for sedition, factionalism, and heresy, not baptism." A month later in his publication concerning the office of the preacher (Von dem Predigtamt) Zwingli asserted that the Anabaptists were undermining the foundations of government because they taught against paying interest, taxes, and other dues imposed by the civil authorities.[3] It should be noted in passing that there is no evidence in any of the published records that any Anabaptist ever was accused in a Zurich court for refusal to pay taxes, interest, or tithes. Zwingli had become the spokesman of the state in the controversy with the Anabaptists. As the struggle became more intense, increasingly his line of attack was that the Anabaptists were dangerous seditionists.

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[1] Grebel to Castelberger, Zurich, prior to May 27, 1525, *Q. Zurich*, No. 63.

[2] Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, May 30, 1525, *Q. Zurich*, No. 70.

[3] *ZW*, III, 872.

[4] *ZW*, IV, 188-337.

[5] *ZW*, IV, 206.

The Anabaptists sought earnestly for the opportunity of presenting their views in print. Balthasar Hubmaier addressed an urgent petition to the Zurich council on July 10, 1525, that he might proceed to Zurich under a guarantee of safe-conduct to discuss the question of baptism with Zwingli.[4] He reported that he had a book on the subject almost ready for publication. The council refused to grant Hubmaier's request.

Zwingli's colleague, Leo Jud, wrote to Vadian in August 1525: "Either through our own fault or because of the vacillation, not to say negligence, of our magistrates, we are waging war with these most monstrous monsters [the Anabaptists], nor as yet do I believe that the struggle is ever going to be finished.[5] No doubt that which was giving the authorities in Zurich particular concern in the summer of 1525 was the rapid spread of the movement in the extensive district of Grüningen which lay east of Zurich. During the years from 1525 to 1528 Anabaptism developed in this district into a popular mass movement. The soil had been well prepared.[1] The peasants of Grüningen harbored a deep and ancient animosity toward the city of Zurich, which, they feared, endangered their cherished political independence and economic autonomy. They resisted the centralizing efforts of the city, whose hated instrument and symbol was the Landvogt. The Reformation stirred up these currents of peasant resistance. They demanded the abolition of the tithe, the secularization of the cloisters, and the right to elect their own pastors. Many of the local parish priests lent their encouragement. In April 1525 a mob of peasants plundered the cloister of Rüti. On the counsel of the Landvogt, Georg Berger, the Zurich council refused to accede to any of the demands of the peasants and appropriated to itself the cloister lands and the right to appoint local pastors. The citizenry of Grüningen was very bitter. Into this district came the Anabaptist missionaries and immediately their message obtained an enthusiastic popular response. The missionaries spoke of a free church of believers, the radical separation of church from state, the renunciation of force, the realization of a community order in which "divine right" prevailed. This appealed to the disillusioned and embittered peasantry.

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[1] ZW, IV, 216.

[2] ZW, Vol. VIII, No. 371.

[3] ZW, IV, 388.

[4] Q. Zurich, No. 82.

[5] Vadianische Briefsammlung der Stadtbibliothek St. Gallen, eds. Emil Arbenz and Hermann Wartmann (St. Gall, 1888-1913), III, 118.

Conrad Grebel arrived in Grüningen late in June 1525 and soon thereafter was preaching in the villages of the district.[2] Early in July Grebel and his colleague, Marx Bosshart of Zollikon, received a summons to appear in Zurich for trial on the charge of slandering Zwingli's recent book on baptism. Grebel and Bosshart responded to the summons with a petition to the Zurich council, dated July 6, 1525, in which they requested a letter of safe-conduct to and from the trial.[3] The council rejected the request and once more demanded that they present themselves in Zurich for trial.[1] Grebel again refused, but Bosshart and two other Anabaptists complied. As was feared, Bosshart and the others were thrust into prison. Bosshart was held in prison until August 2 on the charges of preaching publicly and creating unrest.[2] He was released only after paying costs and posting a bond of one hundred pounds. One of his associates, Fridli Schumacher, was still in prison on August 9.[3] Another Anabaptist who was held prisoner in Zurich throughout the period from July 18 to October 7, 1525, was Felix Manz.[4] He had been extradited by the Chur authorities to Zurich on July 18.[5]

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[1] Leonhard von Muralt, "Grüningen," ML, II, 193-95.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 85. [3] Q. Zurich, No. 80.

Meanwhile Grebel was pressing the missionary work in Grüningen, seeking especially to win the active support of the local pastors. The vigilant Landvogt, Georg Berger, submitted on July 12 a long report to the Zurich council on the activities of Grebel,[6] accompanying it with a series of statements from witnesses concerning him.[7] Grebel was reported by several to have complained that he had not received proper justice from the Zurich magistracy. He had demanded his legal rights according to imperial, cantonal, and divine law, but his appeal had been denied. The peasants of Grüningen could sympathize with one who claimed to have been deprived of his legal birthright. Several witnesses also reported that Grebel was desirous of obtaining permission for the publication of his "writing." If this were granted, he would be prepared to meet Zwingli in a public disputation. Grebel was said to have declared that if Zwingli should overcome him in debate, he, Grebel, would be burned at the stake; however, if he, Grebel, triumphed, he would not demand that Zwingli be burned. Grebel was also reported to have said: "You should regard neither the opinion of the magistracy nor of any man, but should do only that which God requires of you. . . ."

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[1] Q. Zurich, No. 83.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 91.

[3] Q. Zurich, No. 94.

[4] Q. Zurich, Nos. 87, n. 1; 108.

[5] Q. Zurich, No. 86.

[6] Q. Zurich, No. 85.

[7] Q. Zurich, No. 84.

Other Anabaptists arrived in Grüningen to join in the leadership of the movement. Two Anabaptist leaders from Waldshut appeared there, Ulrich Teck and Jacob Gross, both driven from their native city because they refused to bear arms in the defense of their town.[1] Georg Blaurock and Felix Manz returned from their labors in Chur and Appenzell.[2] The Landvogt, Georg Berger, dispatched a continuous flow of detailed intelligence reports to the Zurich council on the spread of the movement. In August 1525 he recommended to the council that if the Anabaptists were to be checked, fines should be raised from one silver mark to five pounds per person.[3] Backed by the central authority, Berger was determined to halt the Anabaptists. One Sunday morning, October 8, 1525, he heard that a large meeting was being held in the town of Hinwil.[4] Berger rode in haste from Grüningen castle to break up the meeting where Grebel, Manz, and Blaurock were present. When the Landvogt arrived he found Blaurock preaching from the pulpit of the village church. The magistrate and his servant arrested Blaurock. Despite a warning and prohibition from Berger, the people proceeded to a nearby open field where they held a mass meeting. The crowd made it clear to the magistrate that their sympathies were with the Anabaptist leaders. After obtaining assistance from a nearby village, Berger arrested Grebel and imprisoned him with Blaurock in the Grüningen castle. Manz escaped arrest, but was captured three weeks later.[5] More than one hundred Anabaptists were imprisoned during this period in the district of Grüningen, an area which had a population of a little more than eight hundred able-bodied men.[6] In evaluating the strength of the movement one may presume that in addition to that substantial portion of the population which was imprisoned were many Anabaptists who had escaped arrest and still more who were sympathetic with the convictions of their Anabaptist neighbors. Although the leaders had been seized and imprisoned, the movement continued with full vigor in the district of Grüningen. However, the days of martyrdom had begun.

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[1] Q. Zurich, No. 107.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 109.

[3] Q. Zurich, No. 95.

[4] Q. Zurich, Nos. 109, 111.

[5] Q. Zurich, No. 117.

[6] Von Muralt, "Grüningen," ML, II, 193.

As the movement was having remarkable success in Grüningen, the city authorities were keeping the Anabaptists in the neighborhood of Zurich under the closest surveilance. On October 9, 1525, the council appointed a committee of nine to give them counsel on what to do about the foreign Anabaptists who circulated throughout the canton and received food, shelter, and protection from the people.[1] The council accepted the committee's recommendation to call upon the guildmasters to appoint six men in each guild who were to be fully equipped with weapons and armor to be on call as a force of vigilantes for the suppression of Anabaptists. They were to stand ready to rush to the city hall when the alarm was sounded and then proceed by armored ship along the shore of the lake to Zollikon, if, for example, there was a disturbance in that community. Four councilmen and several citizens of Zollikon were appointed as espionage agents to report immediately of any suspected meetings of Anabaptists.

Meanwhile the problem arose in Grüningen as to what to do with all the Anabaptists held prisoner by the Landvogt. Conscious of the warm sympathy which the people had for the Anabaptists, the local officials were fearful of the consequences if they were to yield up the prisoners to the Zurich council as demanded. The twelve judges and other officials of Grüningen met in a district assembly to consider the problem. Instead of turning over any of the prisoners to Zurich, they decided to send a deputation of four men to the city council to urge "our gracious lords" to grant a request for a public disputation with the Anabaptists.[2] They added that Zwingli should be instructed to "allow the men of the opposing party to have their say in the debate and not to interrupt and stop them, so that this question can finally be disposed of." Further, they asked the city authorities to respect the ancient prerogatives of the district which authorized local officials to exercise supreme jurisdiction over its citizens. The Landvogt, Georg Berger, also requested a disputation at the earliest possible date, since he evidently felt that such a consideration would serve to quiet the agitated populace.[1] Berger recommended that the debate be thrown open to the whole public, that the Anabaptists be granted safe conduct papers, and that a panel of twelve representative men of neutral viewpoint should be appointed to hear and judge the proceedings.[2] The Zurich council also received a petition from the Anabaptists of Zollikon urging an open disputation.[3]

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[1] Q. Zurich, No. 110.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 115.

A public debate, the third public Anabaptist disputation to be authorized by the city council, was held in Zurich from November 6 to 8, 1525.[4] The first sessions met in the city hall, but because of the throngs of people the meetings were transferred to the larger hall of the Great Minster. Four presidents chaired the disputation, including Sebastian Hofmeister, formerly of Schaffhausen, and Vadian of St. Gall. The major disputants were Grebel and Manz for the Anabaptists and Zwingli, Jud, and Grossman for the state clergy. Apparently the disputation, of which there is no extant record, yielded no significant results. Following the debate on November 18, 1525, Grebel, Manz, and Blaurock were sentenced "because of their Anabaptism and improper practices" to imprisonment in the Witch Tower on a diet of bread, water, and gruel and with no visitors except the guards.[5] The prisoners were to lie there "as long as God should please and as seems good to the magistracy." In the same decision the foreign Anabaptists, Ulrich Teck of Waldshut, Martin Weninger of

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[1] Q. Zurich, No. 114.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 116.

[3] Q. Zurich, No. 118.

[4] Q. Zurich, No. 139; Heinrich Bullingers Reformationsgeschichte, I, 296.

[5] Q. Zurich, No. 133.

Schaffhausen, and Michael Sattler of Stauffen in Breisgau, were banished from the land.

The Anabaptist leaders who were sentenced on November 18 were given a proper legal trial.[1] The principal defendants were Grebel, Manz, Blaurock, and Margaret Hottinger of Zollingen. Zwingli and Sebastian Hofmeister appeared as the chief witnesses of the prosecution. Zwingli's evidence against the Anabaptists consisted of a report of his interviews with Grebel, Manz, and Stumpf two years before when they had urged that he lead in the erection of a free church of committed believers.[2] He also related several third-hand reports adverse to the Anabaptists. In his summary Zwingli accused the defendants of plotting revolution, stating that "from all this testimony he could infer nothing else but that the Anabaptists had as their final purpose to so increase their numbers that they would be able to emancipate themselves from the authority of the magistracy." Again Zwingli's strategy was to shift the attack against the Anabaptists from accusations of doctrinal and exegetical error to charges of political sedition and social revolution. Hofmeister testified that he had once discussed the question of the magistracy with Manz, who, he said, argued that "it was not required."[3] Manz also was reported to have opposed the use of the sword. Zwingli and several other witnesses singled out the impulsive Blaurock for attack.[4] They passed on reports which they had received from others that Blaurock had made certain inflammatory statements, which, they intimated, evidenced a violent and rebellious purpose.

The accused had opportunity to defend themselves against the charges of sedition and revolution. Grebel denied that he had ever taught that men should not obey the magistracy or that he had urged a communism of goods.[5] Blaurock also denied the charges made against him.[6] In reply to the accusation that he had returned to the canton after having sworn an oath never to return, he asserted that he had "never sworn such an oath and would rather die than forswear the earth of God, for the earth is the Lord's." Manz explained concerning the magistracy that "no Christian may strike with sword nor even resist those who are wicked."[1]

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[1] Q. Zurich, No. 120, n. 1.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 120.

[3] Q. Zurich, No. 121.

[4] Q. Zurich, Nos. 120, 121.

[5] Q. Zurich, No. 122.

[6] Q. Zurich, No. 124.

With the imprisonment of the three Anabaptist leaders, the government embarked upon a new and more intense phase of its organized effort to stamp out the movement.

## An Intensification of Persecution

The council acknowledged on January 13, 1526, that great numbers were being baptized by the Anabaptists.[2] To check this trend, the council issued a mandate ordering a severer penalty for those who were rebaptized: a fine of five pounds. On the suggestion of Landvogt Georg Berger the council on January 30 increased the fines to ten pounds per person, plus court and prison costs.[3] Grebel, Manz, and Blaurock remained in prison throughout the winter of 1525-1526. A number of other Anabaptists were added to the many imprisoned in the Witch Tower.[4] The most notable addition to the ranks of the prisoners was Balthasar Hubmaier, who fled to Zurich on December 7, 1525, to escape capture by the Austrian troops who invaded and occupied Waldshut.[5] A few days after his arrival in Zurich, where he had hoped for asylum, Hubmaier was cast into prison.

The authorities in the district of Grüningen, meanwhile, were confronted with a most perplexing problem in their dealings with the Anabaptists. This situation was reflected throughout the winter in the stream of reports which Landvogt Berger dispatched every few days to the city council. The disputation of November 6-8, 1525, which the officials had hoped would terminate the controversy, had not satisfied the Anabaptists. Local officials in Grüningen heard many complaints that the Anabaptists had not been given a proper opportunity to speak and that at the end of the debate the leaders were unjustly imprisoned.[1] Sensing the unrest of local officials, the Landvogt urged the Zurich council to write a letter to the twelve village judges of the district explaining how the Anabaptists had been given a proper hearing and the reasons justifying the suppressive measures.[2] The council thereupon wrote on November 15 a long, diplomatically-worded letter giving the background to the whole Anabaptist problem and inviting the cooperation of the local officials.[3] The usual general charges were advanced against the Anabaptists: "Disagreeableness, disobedience, disruption of the Christian love among men, . . . creating a special sect and faction opposed to the honor of God, contemptuous of the temporal magistracy, and productive of all disobedience." The council defended the fairness of the recent disputation. It recommended that all should read Zwingli's recently published refutation of Hubmaier's treatise on baptism (Antwort über Balthasar Hubmaiers Taufbüchlein).[4] In late November 1525 the local officials read the November 15 letter of the Zurich council to the Anabaptist prisoners crowded together in the Grüningen castle.[5] Thirteen yielded to the will of the authorities, but approximately ninety remained steadfast in their Anabaptist convictions. The council issued a mandate on November 30 for the district of Grüningen which levied a fine of one silver mark on parents who failed to bring their children to baptism.[6] To the deep dismay of the Landvogt, all the Anabaptists escaped from the castle on the night of December 30, 1525.[7] Berger immediately summoned all village officials and pastors to an assembly meeting on January 2, 1526, where a strategy was laid for rounding up the escaped prisoners.[1] It is significant to observe that throughout these involved proceedings the village officials (twelve judges) sought to play a mediating role between the Anabaptists and the city government. The astute Landvogt kept himself discreetly in the background as the twelve judges negotiated with both the Anabaptists and the magistrates. Landvogt Berger knew that if the power of the city authority was asserted too boldly, the people of Grüningen might rebel in an explosive manner.

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[1] Ibid.
[2] Q. Zurich, No. 159.
[3] Q. Zurich, No. 163.
[4] Q. Zurich, Nos. 169, 170, 170a, 170b.
[5] Q. Zurich, No. 157, n. 5.

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[1] Q. Zurich, Nos. 125, 126.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 128.

[3] Q. Zurich, No. 129.

[4] ZW, IV, 577-642.

[5] Q. Zurich, No. 137.

[6] Q. Zurich, No. 139.

[7] Q. Zurich, No. 150.

All the Anabaptist prisoners held in the city of Zurich were given a second trial on March 5 and 6, 1526,[2] a trial which was probably simply a legal backdrop for the promulgation of a new and harsher mandate against the Anabaptists. Only very brief statements from the principal defendants were reported in the trial records. Grebel again requested permission to publish a "writing" as Zwingli had often been permitted to do.[3] Immediately following the trial on March 7, 1526, the council issued the new mandate which introduced for the first time the sentence of death by drowning for all those who performed rebaptism.[4] The guilty parties were to be drowned "without mercy," that is without trial or further hearing. The identical punishment was to be meted out to those who afforded lodging and food to the Anabaptists. The council commanded that the mandate was to be publicly announced in the three parishes of the city and in all country districts. In justification of this new mandate, the council listed again the usual accusations that the Anabaptists "persisted in opposing the oath, were prejudicial to the community order and magistracy, destroyed the common welfare. . . ." Heinrich Bullinger wrote of this mandate as follows: "When all measures proved fruitless and the Anabaptists, contrary to divine and civil rights, continued to promote their sect, Anabaptism was forbidden on pain of death."[1] More than a year after the promulgation of the mandate, Zwingli indicated that there had been division of opinion in March 1526 as to how the Anabaptists should be punished.[2] On the day of the issuance of the mandate, March 7, 1526, Zwingli had written to Vadian: "Thus the long tried patience of the authorities has come to an end."[3] He continued: "I regret the unsurpassed courage of these people and can derive no pleasure from [the persecution]. I would prefer that the beginning of [the Reformation] should not be initiated with such an incident." But, he explained, this was the "only way to prevent greater future evil."

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[1] Q. Zurich, No. 153.

[2] Q. Zurich, Nos. 169, 170, 170b, 171.

[3] Q. Zurich, No. 170.

[4] Q. Zurich, No. 172.

In an order accompanying the mandate eighteen Anabaptists--twelve men and six women--were sentenced to be returned to the Witch Tower where they were to remain until they died. Included among the prisoners was the mother of Felix Manz. The conditions of their imprisonment were exceptionally harsh. Men and women were herded together into a common dungeon cell. They were confined to a diet of bread and water, given only straw on the floor for sleeping, and denied any visitors. The order was given that no one who became ill was to be removed from the prison. Zwingli in his March 7 letter to Vadian wrote: "This day the council has decided that the Anabaptist leaders shall be cast into the Tower to remain there until they either give up the ghost or recant."[4] The council, however, had not been of one mind because Zwingli in the same letter wrote: "In vain did your father-in-law plead for mercy [for the Anabaptist prisoners]." Vadian's father-in-law was the influential councilman, Jacob Grebel. Zwingli later admitted that even members of his own party "thought that what had been done to [the Anabaptists] was too monstrous."[5]

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[1] Heinrich Bullingers Reformationsgeschichte, I, 298.

[2] Selected Works of Zwingli, p. 136.

[3] Zwingli to Vadian, Zurich, March 6, 1526, ZW, Vol. VIII, No. 459.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Selected Works of Zwingli, p. 136.

The prospect of seeing their lives ebb away in a miserable prison was probably the factor which caused five of the prisoners to recant and thus regain their freedom.[1] The life-long imprisonment, however, lasted less than a month for the remaining prisoners. They escaped from the Witch Tower through an unlocked window, lowering themselves to the ground by a rope, and then crossing the moat by a drawbridge that happened to be down. Grebel, Manz, Blaurock, and another prisoner refused at first to take advantage of the opportunity to escape, but soon allowed themselves to be persuaded. The account of the escape is derived from the testimony of two prisoners, Wilhelm Exel of Vaud and Fridli Abyberg of Schwyz, who chose to remain in the city and were subsequently captured.[2] As the prisoners were fleeing from the Tower they discussed among themselves where they might go and several humorously suggested, "Let us go to the red Indians across the sea." It was to be yet one hundred years before Protestant dissenters were to find a place of religious refuge in the New World.

The Mandate of March 7, 1526, was a severe blow to the Anabaptist cause. The new movement was forced to go underground. Little is known of the further activities of Conrad Grebel. He finally succeeded in having a pamphlet on baptism published.[3] Johannes Kessler reports that Grebel and Manz, following their escape from prison, preached in Appenzell and the Graubünden.[4] Kessler adds that Conrad Grebel soon thereafter died of the plague at Maienfeld in Graubünden. Local officials informed Zurich in late June 1526 that Manz and Blaurock had been preaching to groups in the forests of Grüningen.[5] Several months later the pair were captured and imprisoned in Grüningen.[6] In April 1526 Hubmaier was expelled from the canton.[7] By the spring of 1526 the Anabaptist movement in Zurich had been stripped of its original group of leaders.

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[1] Q. Zurich, No. 173.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 178.

[3] Bender, Conrad Grebel, pp. 161, 270, n. 102.

[4] Sabbata, p. 164.

[5] Q. Zurich, No. 184.

[6] Q. Zurich, No. 195.

[7] Q. Zurich, No. 179.

The story of Balthasar Hubmaier's encounter with the city authorities merits closer examination. Soon after Hubmaier's flight from Waldshut to Zurich in December 1525, the city council received a formal request from the Austrian government for the extradition of Hubmaier, who it was charged had organized a conspiracy against the Austrian and imperial authorities.[1] With elaborate protests of friendship toward the Austrian government, the Zurich council replied on January 3, 1526, that Hubmaier could not be extradited because he was being held in prison under charges and would in due course be properly punished.[2] During this period Hubmaier offered to recant his views concerning adult baptism. It may be conjectured that he was prompted to renounce his Anabaptism out of fear that the Zurich authorities might deliver him over to the Austrians. It is apparent in his written confession--which is less a recantation than an apology--that Hubmaier was not really dissuaded from his convictions concerning believers' baptism.[3] He acknowledged, however, that through talks with Ulrich Zwingli, Leo Jud, Sebastian Hofmeister, and Oswald Myconius he was persuaded to yield to the community will on the issue of infant baptism out of love for his neighbors. He took opportunity in the confession to deny the accusation that he had rejected the magistracy and taught that a Christian could not hold office. He declared: "I have always and everywhere said that a Christian may well sit in government, and that the more Christian he is, the more honorably would he rule." Mindful of the danger of extradition to the Austrian authorities, he begged not to be "delivered into the hands of my enemies, especially as I am an infirm man. . . ." The alert Landvogt Georg Berger, hearing of Hubmaier's confession, wrote to the Zurich council late in December 1525 to request permission that Hubmaier be sent to Grüningen to make his confession before a large church assembly in the town of Gossau.[1] Berger was confident that if this leading Anabaptist made a recantation in the district of Grüningen, the heartland of the movement, it would have a profound effect on the many Anabaptists and their sympathizers.

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[1] Q. Zurich, No. 502.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 403.

[3] Q. Zurich, No. 147.

Arrangements were made for Hubmaier to read his confession in the Minster of Our Lady (Fraumünster) after which Zwingli was to deliver a sermon. This procedure was followed but Hubmaier upset the carefully laid plans by arising again after the sermon and recanting publicly his recantation.[2] He was hurried back to prison where he was subjected to cruel treatment. Zwingli later gave an account of this imprisonment:

> The next day he was thrust back into prison and tortured. It is clear the man had become a sport of demons, so he recanted not frankly as he had promised. He had in fact said that he entertained no other principles than those originally taught by me, cursed the error and obstinacy of the Anabaptists, repeated this three times when stretched upon the rack, and lamented his misery and the wrath of God which in this affair was so unkind.[3]

By such measures, stated Zwingli, Hubmaier was "allured" into making a more explicit recantation. While in prison he set forth in the form of a prayer his Twelve Articles of Christian Belief, which were printed as a booklet the following year in Moravia.[4] The final paragraph implies that he had intimate acquaintance with torture:

> And though I be driven from [my confession] by human fear and terror, by tyranny, pangs, sword, fire, or water, yet I cry to thee, O my merciful Father: Raise me up again by the grace of thy Holy Spirit, and let me not depart in death without this faith.[5]

On April 11, 1526, the council decided to release Hubmaier from prison on condition that he would make a public confession in the three major churches of Zurich, swear an oath to renounce the Anabaptist movement, and leave the territory of Zurich.[1] No sooner had he departed from Zurich than he resumed his Anabaptist labors, first in Constance and Augsburg and then for the closing years of his life in Moravia.

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[1] Q. Zurich, No. 149.

[2] Q. Zurich, Nos. 159, n. 1; 404.

[3] Zwingli to Petrus Gynoraeus, Zurich, August 31, 1526, ZW, VIII, 704-5.

[4] A copy of the Twelve Articles in English translation is printed in Vedder, op. cit., pp. 130-36.

[5] Ibid., 136.

Despite the fact that their leaders had been eradicated, the Anabaptists still had influential friends and patrons in high places.[2] This was deeply distressing to Zwingli. In his drive for religious uniformity and the fulfillment of his political program, Zwingli was frequently thwarted by a minority faction of influential councilmen. This small but persistent opposition was concentrated in the Small Council. Zwingli's leading adversary was Jacob Grebel, father of Conrad and a man who had had a long and distinguished career as a councilman, envoy, and magistrate.[3] It is doubtful whether Jacob Grebel shared any of his son's Anabaptist views, but he vigorously opposed Zwingli's drive toward a Reformation theocracy. Grebel once expressed the opinion that Zwingli should "teach the Gospel and refrain from meddling in politics."[4] The elder Grebel and his party wanted no monolithic church-state and, hence, favored toleration of those parties which could serve as a counterpoise to the guild-supported Zwinglian faction. They urged, for example, that one of the churches in the city should be restored to the Roman Catholics. The Grebel faction may have opposed Zwingli out of a secret loyalty to the old faith and a hostility to Zwingli's aggressive foreign policy. It has been noted how Jacob Grebel pled for mercy for the Anabaptist prisoners in March 1526. The all-too-perfect circumstances surrounding the escape of the prisoners a few weeks later leads to the suspicion that they were aided by influential friends in the city. Zwingli complained bitterly that the council majority was frequently frustrated in its program by the skilled machinations of Jacob Grebel and his "accomplices."[1] He lashed out at the elder Grebel and his party as adversaries of the Reformation and secret agents of Catholicism. Zwingli finally concluded that Jacob Grebel must be eliminated if the Reformation was to proceed. One may recall that these were the months following the Disputation of Baden when the Catholic Cantons were militantly confident and Reformed Zurich was dangerously isolated. In such perilous times Zwingli demanded complete civic solidarity.

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[1] Q. Zurich, No. 179.

[2] Bullinger, Widertoufferen vrsprung . . . , pp. 9b, 10a, 213b.

[3] Compare Horsch and von Muralt for divergent interpretations of the struggle between Jacob Grebel and Ulrich Zwingli: John Horsch, "The Struggle between Zwingli and the Swiss Brethren in Zurich," MQR, VII (July, 1933), 148-55; von Muralt, Zum Problem: Reformation and Taufertum," op. cit., p. 80.

[4] Horsch, "The Struggle between Zwingli and the Swiss Brethren in Zurich," op. cit., p. 153.

Jacob Grebel and several of his colleagues were arrested and brought to trial in October 1526 on the charge of having received pensions from foreign powers for his support of the mercenary system.[2] The defendants were tried and sentenced by an ad hoc court of eleven councilmen, apparently hand picked to consider this particular case. Zwingli was the chief prosecutor. Grebel did not deny that he had received subsidies from foreign powers, but it had been more than five years before and at a time when Zwingli, too, had been receiving pensions from the pope. Grebel was beheaded on October 30, 1526, immediately after the sentence of death had been pronounced.[3] Bullinger states that the execution caused great public excitement and many refused to believe that the charge on which he was condemned was the real cause of his death.[4] The gates of the city were closed during the critical days of the trial. To Zwingli's friends abroad the Grebel affair appeared to have been an act of terror, a judicial murder. Zwingli, therefore, felt compelled to defend himself in letters to his friends in Basel and Strassburg, asserting that the cause of the Reformation had been at stake and no other course could be taken.[1] This conflict between Jacob Grebel and Ulrich Zwingli has been related here in some detail because the execution of Grebel signalized the complete defeat of the internal opposition to Zwingli and removed all obstacles to a systematic persecution of the Anabaptists.

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[1] ZW, VIII, 371, 383, 542.

[2] The record of the trial is to be found in Akt. Zurich, No. 1050, pp. 491-511.

[3] Die Chronik des Bernhard Wyss, p. 74.

[4] Heinrich Bullingers Reformationsgeschichte, I, 373.

Landvogt Berger reported with satisfaction to the Zurich council in early December 1526 that the two arch-Anabaptists, Manz and Blaurock, had been captured at a meeting of the brethren in Grüningen forest.[2] They were turned over to the Zurich authorities and soon brought to trial.[3] Blaurock, the fiery evangelist, never was one to articulate his views concerning the role of the magistracy. Manz, however, had discussed on various occasions the questions of the magistracy, freedom of conscience, and nonresistance. At the trial Manz declared that he was and always had been of the conviction that "a Christian could not be a magistrate, and could neither wield the sword of office, nor kill, nor physically punish anyone."[4] These convictions, he explained, were founded upon Scripture. While in prison Manz wrote a tender and moving letter of admonition and consolation to his brethren in the faith on the theme of the suffering, nonresistant church.[5] He assailed the established preachers and teachers of the day "who have come to us in sheep's clothing but who are ravening wolves," and who "call upon the authorities to kill us, by which they destroy the very ways of Christ." One cannot be "hateful and envious" nor can one "betray, accuse, smite, and quarrel" and still be a Christian. Manz asked his brethren to be patient and "show love to all men."

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[1] Zwingli to "Oecolampadius and the Strassburg clergy, especially Capito," Zurich, November 29, 1526, ZW, Vol, VIII, No. 552.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 195. [3] Q. Zurich, Nos. 198, 199, 200.

[4] Q. Zurich, Nos. 200; cf. No. 198.

[5] Q. Zurich, No. 201; an English translation appears in Martyrs' Mirror, pp. 415-16. While in prison Manz wrote the words of a hymn, "With Christ I Will Remain," No. 6 in the Ausbund, a hymn which expresses the identical thoughts of the letter to the brethren.

He also spoke of freedom of conscience: "The Lord Christ compels no one to come to His glory; only those that are willing and prepared to attain unto it by true faith and baptism."

Manz and Blaurock lived in expectation of their death. Zwingli wrote to Oecolampadius on January 3, 1527, "I believe the sword will be put to their necks."[1] They received their sentences on January 5. Felix Manz was executed ostensibly for being a rebel and a perjurer: (1) He had sworn an oath on October 7, 1525, to desist from his Anabaptist activities, and then violated his oath. (2) He failed to comply with the terms of the Mandate of March 7, 1526, which forbade under threat of drowning anyone to rebaptize another. (3) He and others in March 1526 had escaped from prison.[2] In addition to the charges of perjury and lawbreaking, Felix Manz was sentenced to death by drowning for the following reasons:

> He accepted the teaching of rebaptism contrary to Christian order and practice, was rebaptized, taught it to others and was especially a principal leader and instigator of these things. He admitted having said that he and others like him who accepted Christ and intended to follow Him wished to come together and unite themselves through rebaptism, and leave the others undisturbed in their respective faith.[3] He and his adherents wished to separate themselves from the Christian Church, and intended to raise up and mobilize a peculiar, self-initiated sect under the pretense and appearance of a Christian meeting and church. He rejected capital punishment. For the sake of greater success he boasted of certain revelations from the epistles of the Apostle Paul.
>
> Since such teachings are detrimental to the uniform practice of all Christendom, and since they lead to scandal, rebellion, and riot against the government, to the ruin of the general peace, of brotherly love, and of civil concord, and to every calamity, therefore Manz shall be delivered over to the executioner who shall bind his hands, put him in a boat, lead him to the lower hut, and at the lower hut place his bound hands over his knees and thrust a stick between his legs and arms, and throw him bound in that way into the water, and leave him in the water to die and to perish. Thus shall he pay the price to law and justice.[4]

The council appropriated to itself the possessions of Manz. The sentence was carried out that very afternoon. Bullinger writes that "as he was led down from the Wellenberg prison to the fish market and among the fishmongers to the boat, he praised God that he could die for His truth."[1] His mother and brother waited along the way for his coming and called to him to be constant and steadfast. Manz was drowned in the River Limmat at three o'clock that afternoon.

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[1] ZW, Vol. IX, No. 569.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 204; cf. No. 203.

[3] Cf. Q. Zurich, No. 200.

[4] Q. Zurich, No. 204; English translation of the sentence appears in John C. Wenger, Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1947), pp. 28-29.

The Zurich council directed against Georg Blaurock much the same charges as against Felix Manz.[2] However, because Blaurock was not a native of Zurich, he escaped the fate of drowning. The sentence which was pronounced on January 5, 1527, demanded that "the executioner shall bind his hands and strip him of his clothing down to the waist, and then lead him out of the city, flogging him with rods until the blood flows, as he passes along the street from the fish market to the Niederdorf gate." The council warned him that if he ever again set foot in the Canton of Zurich, he would be immediately subjected to the same fate as Felix Manz. The sentence was carried out the same day. Zwingli later recorded that Blaurock had been so severly beaten that he was brought "near to death's door."[3] Two years later Blaurock was burned at the stake in the Tyrol.

Bullinger records that many people were deeply disturbed by the execution of Manz, while many others were little concerned.[4] Wolfgang Capito in Strassburg wrote to his friend Zwingli: "It is reported here that Felix Manz of your city has suffered punishment, and died gloriously; on which account the cause of truth and piety which you sustain, is greatly hindered."[5] Zwingli apparently did not reply to this letter, so Capito wrote again a month later:

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[1] Heinrich Bullingers Reformationsgeschichte, I, 382.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 205, cf. No. 203.

[3] Selected Works of Zwingli, p. 217.

[4] Heinrich Bullingers Reformationsgeschichte, I, 382.

[5] Capito to Zwingli, Strassburg, January 22, 1527, ZW, Vol. IX, No. 578.

"I greatly desire to obtain information about the unhappy Felix Manz, whether he suffered punishment on account of transgression or because of obstinacy as regards his religious views, and also about the firmness which he manifested in meeting his death."[1] Zwingli gave Capito a full account of the Manz case, an explanation which apparently satisfied the Strassburg reformer.[2] Felix Manz was the first Anabaptist to be executed in Protestant lands. Those who have sought to publicize the martyr heroes of the Reformation have passed by, with scarcely a word, the story of Felix Manz. It is the figure of the ill-fated Michael Servetus who has been enshrined in the histories of the struggle for religious freedom. Felix Manz deserves his paragraph in that history.

## Zwingli Consolidates His Victory

The execution of Manz closed the first chapter in the history of the Anabaptist movement in Zurich. The Anabaptists had by no means been eliminated, but the back of the movement was broken. First, there was the Mandate of March 7, 1526, with its death penalty for the rebaptizers. Then there was the expulsion and flight of all the original band of leaders. In October 1526 came the execution of Jacob Grebel and the elimination of that influential circle of friends of the Anabaptists. Finally, there was the death of Manz--the execution being a grim harbinger of persecution.

The task which now defined itself for Zwingli and the Zurich authorities was that of the consolidation of victory. The campaign was fought on four fronts: (1) the publication of a final and definitive "refutation" of Anabaptist views; (2) the mobilization of the support of other cantons in the struggle against the movement; (3) the organization of the activities of the established church so that the competition of the Anabaptists might be effectively repulsed; (4) the elimination of the pockets of Anabaptist strength, particularly in the district of Grüningen.

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[1] Capito to Zwingli, Strassburg, February 28, 1527, ZW, Vol. IX, No. 595.

[2] Capito to Zwingli, Strassburg, April 8, 1527, ZW, Vol. IX, No. 605. Zwingli's letter of explanation to Capito has not been preserved: cf. ZW, IX, 87, n. 3.

Although he had written four major books against the Anabaptists, Zwingli became aware in the spring of 1527 that his previous efforts had failed in the purpose of refuting the Anabaptist principles and discrediting the movement. Zwingli received in April 1527 copies of the Schleitheim Confession of Faith from both Oecolampadius of Basel and Berchtold Haller of Bern.[1] Haller urged that Zwingli take up his pen and refute these articles of faith, copies of which were said to be in the hands of almost every Anabaptist. Zwingli thereupon set himself to the task of writing a polemical treatise against the movement together with a refutation of the seven articles of the Schleitheim Confession. This was published in Latin during the month of July 1527 and was entitled, A Refutation of Anabaptist Tricks (In catabaptistarum strophas elenchus).[2]

Zwingli's Refutation, which was his last book against the Anabaptists, is valuable to the historian for its inclusion of two Anabaptist treatises: the Schleitheim Articles and Grebel's booklet on baptism. In the book Zwingli accuses the Anabaptists of almost every misdeed in the catalog of crimes. His charges, however, are almost entirely of a general, indefinite, and undocumented nature. In only one instance does he specify the basis of a charge; he accused the Anabaptists of being a "murderous sect" because of a certain fratricide in St. Gall.[3] In preference to giving factual foundation for his accusations, Zwingli contented himself with this statement at the outset: "I can abundantly prove these things if occasion demands."[4] Admittedly Zwingli had an abundance of personal experience with the Anabaptists. Hence, one might expect his treatise to contain much truth. It is difficult, however, to winnow the truth from the exaggeration and all that which is outright fabrication. The following are the major criticisms Zwingli made of the Anabaptists in their relationship to the social and political order: (1) They have erroneous views of the magistracy. "The power of every magistracy is particularly hateful to them."[1] They disobey the laws of the "council, the people, the public servants, and police."[2] "I grant that it is easy for them to say that a real Christian needs no magistracy . . . but it is our misfortune that among men we do not find so abolute perfection," even among those "who confess Christ."[3] To maintain that "a Christian may not be a judge . . . is excessively Christian."[4] "Give up the oath in any state . . . and at once the magistracy is removed and all things follow as they would have them. Good gods! What a confusion and upturning of everything!"[5] (2) They are in error in their teaching of nonresistance. "Not applicable to the magistracy is the saying of Christ: Resist not evil, nor that other: you ought not to rule."[6] They condemn the custom of carrying side arms in the council, courts, public assemblies, and in special church ceremonies.[7] "They snarl out . . . foolish statements all the time about laying down arms."[8] "They condemn civic assemblies because they are often accompanied by executions."[9] (3) Worst of all, Anabaptism is not a church but a "rebellion and conspiracy" against the existing social and political order.[10] "They keep agitating these perverse teachings about not exercising the magistracy or taking the oath, so that if possible they may sow their errors without punishment or fear."[11] "These most seditious men would take away the sword so that they may the more freely throw all into confusion."[12] Baptism is a "pretext for sedition, confusion, and tumult."[1] They "allure to the conspiracy untaught men."[2] "They assail the magistrates in terrible fashion."[3] (4) The Anabaptists show contempt toward the established church. "They have attempted a division and partition of the church."[4] "They revile especially the ministers, both of the church and the state."[5] "They condemn the processions to the churches."[6] (5) The Anabaptists are in secret alliance with the Roman Catholics. "They meet with the popish and do not shun their meetings."[7] "The hypocrisy of the Roman pope has been exposed; now we must war with hypocrisy itself."[8] (6) The Anabaptists are a menace to the public moral order. "If you investigate their life and conduct, it seems at the first contact, irreproachable, pious, unassuming, attractive, yea, supermundane. Even those who are difficult to please will think their lives excellent." But this piety is only a cloak for hypocrisy. "They are monsters of deceit."[9] They have their wives in common. The reason why they sometimes meet at night or in the forest is that they desire the opportunity for sexual orgies which they call "spiritual marriages."[10] "They hold all things in common and threaten with extreme [action] others unless they do the same."[11] "No matter what crime they are caught in committing, even in the very act . . . adultery, parricide, perjury, theft, evil, guile" they seek to escape by saying that "I have not sinned, for I am no longer in the flesh, but in the spirit."[12] "They are steeped in abominable crimes."[13] They "excel" all mortals in "lewdness, adultery, murder, hatred, envy, arrogance, hypocrisy."[14]

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[1] Oecolampadius to Zwingli, Basel, April 24, 1526, ZW, Vol. IX, No. 607; Haller to Zwingli, Bern, April 25, 1527, ZW, Vol. IX, No. 608.

[2] ZW, VI, 1-196.

[3] Selected Works of Zwingli, p. 171.

[4] Ibid., p. 129.

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 192.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 135.

[3] _Ibid._, p. 197.

[4] _Ibid._, pp. 200-201.

[5] _Ibid._, pp. 208-9.

[6] _Ibid._, p. 193.

[7] _Ibid._, p. 192.

[8] _Ibid._, p. 193.

[9] _Ibid._, p. 190.

[10] _Ibid._, pp. 186, 187.

[11] _Ibid._, p. 206.

[12] _Ibid._, pp. 197-98.

The above accusations were written by the man who was the leading clergyman and the most important political personality in Zurich and, no doubt, the one who drafted many of the state papers on Anabaptist matters. Zwingli's Refutation is typical of that flood of polemical literature against the Anabaptists which was produced in abundance during the entire period.

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 128.
[2] _Ibid._, p. 186.
[3] _Ibid._, p. 136.
[4] _Ibid._, p. 134.
[5] _Ibid._, p. 136.
[6] _Ibid._, p. 190.
[7] _Ibid._, p. 189.
[8] _Ibid._, p. 137.
[9] _Ibid._, p. 127.
[10] _Ibid._, p. 191.
[11] _Ibid._, p. 154.
[12] _Ibid._, pp. 128-29.
[13] _Ibid._, p. 195.
[14] _Ibid._, p. 187.

The second major task confronting Zwingli and the Zurich council was that of mobilizing the support of other cantons in the struggle against the Anabaptist movement. The peripatetic Anabaptist leaders could only be brought under control if uniform suppressive measures were employed in the several cantons. Zurich's crowning achievement in this effort was the Concordat of August 14, 1527, the provisions of which were examined in the previous chapter. It will be revealed in subsequent chapters how Zurich, particularly in the person of Zwingli, was a decisive influence in inducing other governments to take more vigorous action against the Anabaptists.

The third approach employed by the Zurich authorities in consolidating the victory over the Anabaptists was that of organizing more efficiently the life of the church to meet their competition. The Anabaptist threat, of course, was not the only factor that impelled the authorities to effect a closer-knit organization of the church. It was, however, a major factor. As early as May 30, 1526, the three city clergymen--Heinrich Engelhard, Leo Jud, and Zwingli--recommended to the city council that in order to control the spread of Anabaptism each parish church should keep a register of baptisms and a register of marriages, and the state should require that all marriages must be solemnized in church.[1] The council approved these recommendations.[2] Orders were dispatched to all Landvögte on December 16, 1527, requiring everyone to attend regularly the services in parish churches. Those who absented themselves were to be arrested, placed in Wellenberg prison, and not released until they paid five pounds.[3] A closer organization of the clergy of the canton was obtained through the establishment of a synod, which met for the first time on

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[1] Q. Zurich, No. 183.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 406.

[3] Q. Zurich, No. 242.

April 21, 1528, at which time much information was shared concerning the activities of the Anabaptists.[1] At a meeting of the synod in 1529 the clergy complained of the patrons and friends of the Anabaptists and the negligence of the government officials in punishing the many who were guilty of public vices.[2] It was recognized that the frivolity and drunkenness of church people was conducive to the growth of Anabaptism. A systematic visitation program of the parishes was made obligatory. The charge was made that Anabaptism broke up family life, since husbands often lived separately from their wives. The record of the synod reveals how spies were sent out to lie in wait and seize Anabaptists in their forest meetings. Subsequent synods devoted considerable attention to the problem of the Anabaptists.[3] One may observe that in the 1530's Anabaptist problems were increasingly handled by the Divorce Court (*Ehegericht*).[4]

The keystone in the Zurich Reformation was the great Mandate of March 26, 1530, regulating public conduct (*Das grosse Sittenmandat*).[5] This included a host of detailed regulations governing public morality. To check the vigorous lay activity encouraged by the Anabaptists, the mandate prescribed that the proper role of the laity was simply passive attendance at all worship services. The laity were forbidden to dispute with their pastors. "Because this sect destroys all civil authority and good government," the mandate stated, "it is forbidden under the severest punishment to grant aid and shelter to Anabaptists." All *Landvögte* and other officials, even pastors, were commissioned to notify the proper authorities of all persons who separated themselves from the church and especially those who refused to swear the annual oath of civic loyalty. If one refused to take the oath it was generally considered *prima facie* evidence that the individual was an Anabaptist.

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[1] *Q. Zurich*, No. 410; cf. No. 252.

[2] *Q. Zurich*, No. 292.

[3] Cf. *Q. Zurich*, Nos. 318, 319, 336.

[4] Cf. *Q. Zurich*, Nos. 338, 415.

[5] *Q. Zurich*, No. 312.

Finally, Zwingli and the Zurich authorities were confronted with the task of eradicating the Anabaptist movement where it was especially deep rooted, notably in the district of Grüningen. In a supplement to the Mandate of March 6, 1526, the Zurich council on November 19, 1526, singled out the Anabaptists in the district of Grüningen for more severe punishment.[1] The council demanded that in Grüningen not only those who performed rebaptism, but also those who attended Anabaptist meetings, were to be executed by drowning. The Grüningen officials, however, ignored this demand. The execution of Manz, which the authorities hoped would bring to terms the remaining Anabaptists, failed to produce any recantations among the many prisoners held in the district of Grüningen. Among these Anabaptist prisoners were Jacob Falk and Heini Reimann, both natives of the district and recognized leaders of the brotherhood. Zurich demanded of the Grüningen officials in the spring of 1527 that these two should be executed according to the terms of the mandate.[2] Falk and Reimann protested to the officials of Grüningen that the earlier disputations had not afforded a proper hearing for the Anabaptist viewpoint and asked that they be granted the right to defend themselves in print. A district assembly met in May 1527, where it was agreed that the earlier disputations had been properly conducted and where it was acknowledged that the Mandate of March 6, 1526, was valid. The assembly, however, appealed to an ancient privilege granted Grüningen by the Hapsburgs which permitted the district to pardon criminals whom it considered worthy of clemency. That set off a prolonged jurisdictional struggle between the district assembly of Grüningen and the Zurich council. More than thirty documents bear witness to the length and intensity of the struggle. The district assembly was prepared to confine the two Anabaptists in prison indefinitely, but the city council demanded death by drowning.[3] With the permission of the Grüningen assembly, the

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[1] Q. Zurich, No. 192.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 211.

[3] Q. Zurich, p. 248, n. 1.

Anabaptists presented in June 1527 a memorial (Eingabe) explaining their position.[1] Among other things, they asserted that the mandates of the council against the Anabaptists were contrary to the Word of God and the commands of Christ. They declared, "We are to obey God rather than men." They explained that Christ gave the faithful no other instrument of power than the Scriptural ban. "Now the authorities want to compel us of the Christian church to enter a foreign church." Zurich and Grüningen finally resolved the conflict by agreeing to submit the case to the Council of Bern for arbitration.[2] Bern decided on August 2, 1528, in favor of Zurich's position.[3] The Grüningen officials thereupon turned Falk and Reimann over to the Zurich authorities, who placed them on trial. Jacob Falk in the hearing refused to give the names of any whom he had baptized because "he would not be the cause of the persecution and death of his fellow men and brethren."[4] On September 5, 1528, Falk and Reimann were sentenced to death by drowning.[5] Several days later the Zurich council ordered that the other Anabaptists imprisoned in Grüningen could be released if they recognized the institution of infant baptism.[6] Some of these had been imprisoned fifteen months. If they refused they were to remain imprisoned on a diet of bread and water. Many of the prisoners recanted. With the execution of Falk and Reimann in September 1528 and the recantation of many Grüningen Anabaptists, the strength of the movement in the district appeared to have been broken.

One may properly inquire why the district assembly of Grüningen defended the Anabaptists. It should be noted, first, that the Grüningen officials agreed with the city council that the Anabaptists should be punished, but they favored a more moderate punishment. Secondly, the assembly was obliged to protect the Anabaptists out of respect for their many friends and relatives in the district. Landvogt Berger admitted in August 1527 that the drive to punish the Anabaptists was causing a deep rift among the people.[1] Finally, and perhaps most important, the assembly was desirous of preserving its ancient jurisdictional rights from being abrogated by the Zurich council which seemed to them bent upon a program of aggrandizement and centralization.[2]

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[1] Q. Zurich, No. 212.

[2] Q. Zurich, Nos. 229, 230, 231, 233.

[3] Q. Zurich, p. 277, n. 1.

[4] Q. Zurich, No. 257.

[5] Q. Zurich, No. 273.

[6] Q. Zurich, No. 274.

Whereas the Anabaptist movement was quieted in Grüningen by the end of 1528, it flared up with unusual vigor the following year in the lower country (Unterland), a region to the northwest of the city of Zurich. It was a border region bounded on the northeast by the Klettgau of Schaffhausen, on the northwest by the Austrian Breisgau, and on the southwest by the county of Baden and the Bernese Aargau. Border regions were usually conducive to Anabaptist activity because, as in the case of the Unterland district, they lay on the routes of travel of itinerant missionaries and the nearby frontiers offered the harried Anabaptists many exits of escape when they were obliged to flee from the pursuing constabulary. A great number of Anabaptists from the Unterland were rounded up and brought to trial in December 1529 and January 1530.[3] In one of the trials, that of January 20, 1530, seventeen prisoners publicly renounced their Anabaptism.[4] The court ruled that each was to swear an oath of recantation, pay a fine of one silver mark, pay all court and prison costs, and make a public confession in his village church on the following Sunday. Failure to comply with any of these provisions was to result in renewed imprisonment. Several refused to renounce their Anabaptism. The Anabaptist leader who had been most active in this region was Conrad Winkler, who had baptized so many that he could not recall the number.[5] On the same day that many other Anabaptists were tried, January 20, 1530, Conrad Winkler as a "headman and ringleader" of the movement was sentenced to be drowned in the River Limmat.[1] The trials of December and January and the execution of Winkler in early 1530 were the finishing blows to the movement in the Unterland region.

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[1] Q. Zurich, No. 231.

[2] Leonhard von Muralt, "Grüningen," ML, 193-95.

[3] Q. Zurich, Nos. 293, 294, 295, 296, 298, 301, 302, 304.

[4] Q. Zurich, No. 304.

[5] Q. Zurich, No. 305.

The Anabaptist movement had been quite effectively suppressed in all parts of the Canton of Zurich by the end of January 1530. Indicative of this triumph of the state was that by the end of 1527 Zwingli had ceased to evidence anxious concern about the threat of the Anabaptists.

## The Twilight Days of Anabaptism

The Anabaptists manifested themselves only sporadically after 1530. On January 10, 1530, the city council sent eight of its members to Küsnacht, south along the shores of Lake Zurich, to interview a group of Anabaptist prisoners and dissuade them from their views.[2] Two Anabaptists were brought to trial on February 2, 1530, among whom one was Hans Bruppacher.[3] He testified under torture that he had "never preached against the government and still less that he wanted the government to be abolished in event the Anabaptists obtained power." Christ, he stated, forbade one to kill. He held that even a non-Christian magistrate should neither execute thieves nor murderers. He held also that a Christian should not swear a civil oath. Hans Müller in a hearing in 1530 stated that he wished the civil authorities "would not burden or coerce my conscience because faith was a free gift of God and not everyman's thing (nitt yedermanns ding)."[4] In answer to an inquiry of the Landvogt of Kyburg as to what to do about the spread of Anabaptism in his district, the council on March 12, 1532, sent out to all Landvögte orders for the stringent enforcement of the existing mandates and demanded that local officials should not "look through their fingers" at infringements of the law.[5] Among the prisoners from Grüningen who recanted their Anabaptism in 1528 were Heini Karpfis and Hans Herzog. These two, despite their oaths of recantation, returned to the Anabaptist fold and were captured by the authorities. Following a trial the Zurich council on March 23, 1532, condemned Karpfis and Herzog to death by drowning in the River Limmat.[1] This seems to have been the finishing blow to the Anabaptist movement in Grüningen.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 300.

[3] Q. Zurich, No. 309.

[4] Q. Zurich, No. 322.

[5] Q. Zurich, Nos. 343, 344.

The Zurich council appeared dissatisfied in 1533 with the methods employed in the past and concluded it was best to concentrate upon the arrest and punishment of Anabaptist preachers and teachers. The council wrote in May 1533 to the _Landvogt_ of Kyburg to be indulgent with the common run of Anabaptists "since these folk are not always so steadfast in their faith and indeed want to do nothing wrong."[2] In the 1530's the Zurich council began to use more frequently a new technique of penalizing the Anabaptists, that of confiscating their property.[3] One might have expected that the nonresistant Anabaptists would have had considerable difficulty during the First and Second Kappel Wars of 1529 and 1531 with the problem of military service. However, the many published hearings bear no evidence that this was an issue.

The Zurich council in 1535 requested the clergy to present a documentary opinion on the treatment of the Anabaptists, since it was observed that they were increasing in numerous places and many foreign Anabaptists were stealing across the borders.[4] The _Landvögte_ complained in 1535 that many of the country folk were refusing to take the oath--a warning signal of Anabaptism.[5] The renewed anxiety about the Anabaptists no doubt was stimulated by the knowledge of the revolutionary events at Münster in Westphalia. The clergy declared in their report that the punishment of the Anabaptists, "both the seducers and the seduced," was a responsibility of the government.[1] The clergy repeated the usual charges against the Anabaptists: tearing and dividing the church, despising orthodox doctrine, undermining good government, and creating unrest and rebellion.[2] Added to this the Anabaptists "unite with and strengthen the papists."[3] The dangers inherent in this innocent-appearing movement "are at first not apparent, but eventually they cause great damage." The clergy then advised that the government should discriminate carefully between the Anabaptists of "honorable name" and those of "bad reputation," punishing the former with mildness, and the latter with utmost severity, even death. The clergy strongly emphasized, and Heinrich Bullinger especially, that one should counsel patiently and gently with each Anabaptist. If he is not amenable to counsel, then he is to be treated like any other criminal, "indeed according to the circumstances of the case and the provisions of divine, secular and imperial law." The clergy felt that hereafter more care should be taken in adjusting the punishment to fit the crime.

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[1] _Q. Zurich_, No. 348.

[2] _Q. Zurich_, No. 366.

[3] _Q. Zurich_, No. 377, 386, 388.

[4] Bergmann, _op. cit._, p. 35.

[5] _Ibid._, p. 27.

There is no evidence that the Zurich council introduced any new legislation in 1535 for the suppression of the Anabaptists. In the 1540's there was again an intensification of persecution. The Landvögte were granted the right to execute Anabaptists locally if they would not abstain from the movement.[4] There appear not to have been any more executions after 1532 when Falk and Reimann were drowned. At least six Anabaptists had been drowned for their faith in the years 1527-1532. Complaints were made at two meetings of the Swiss Diet in 1550 that the Anabaptists were spreading in the County of Toggenburg and also in Zurich territory.[5] Later in the century the Anabaptists reappeared in greater strength in various rural districts of the Canton of Zurich.

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[1] Ibid., p. 36; for a complete copy of the opinion of the clergy see Johann K. Füssli, Beiträge zur Erlauterung der Kirchen-Reformations-Geschichten des Schweizerlandes (Zurich: Conrad Orell and Co., 1741), III, 190-201.

[2] Bergmann, op. cit., p. 38.

[3] Ibid., p. 39.

[4] Ibid., p. 42.

[5] Ibid., p. 42, n. 3.

As evidence perhaps of a resurgence of Anabaptism in the second half of the century was the fact that Heinrich Bullinger devoted himself in 1560 to the writing of a book on the origins of Anabaptism, together with a survey and refutation of its principles (*Der Widertäufferen ursprung . . .*). Bullinger stated in a letter to Fabricius that the book was especially written for those in North Germany who were troubled with the "*pestis anabaptistica.*"[1] This work was a hurriedly written version of his book of 1531, *Of the Shameless Wantonness of the Self-sent Anabaptists* (*Von dem unverschampten fräfel . . . der selbegesandten Widertöuffern*). In his volume on the origins of Anabaptism Bullinger stated that he sought to describe the principles of the Anabaptists by reference to their own writings and statements. The following statements, attributed to the Anabaptists by an enemy of the movement, constitute a unique and on the whole reliable summary of their teachings concerning the Christian's relationship to the state:

> They believe that Christians should stand ready to suffer (rather than strike back). No Christian may be a ruler. The government should not undertake to regulate matters of faith and religious practice. Christians do not resist violence and do not take recourse to law. They do not use the law courts. Christians do not kill. The punishment used by them is not imprisonment and the sword but only church discipline. They do not defend themselves; therefore, they do not go to war and are not obedient to the government on that point.[2]
>
> A Christian may not carry a weapon, despite the common practice of the country in which he lives.[3]
>
> Faith and unbelief are of an invisible, spiritual nature and are hidden in the human heart; therefore the church cannot judge the true state of the members. How then can civil authorities undertake to judge and regulate these things by the use of the sword?
>
> One can and should not compel any one to accept the faith, for faith is a free gift of God.
>
> It is wrong to compel any one by force or coercion to embrace the faith, or to put to death any one for the sake of his erring faith.
>
> It is wrong that in the church any sword other than that of the Divine Word should be used.
>
> The secular kingdom should be separated from the church, and no ruler should exercise authority in the church.

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[1] Bullinger to Fabricius, Zurich, December 8, 1559, cited by Cornelius Bergmann, "Heinrich Bullinger," *ML*, I, 295.

[2] Bullinger, *Der Widertöufferen vrsprung . . .*, p. 16.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 23a.

> It is the business of the Great Judge to separate the tares from the good seed. . . . The Lord has clearly ordered, "Let both grow together." Therefore, the government should not undertake to destroy the tares by punishment and death.
>
> Paul instructs the church to exclude a heretic, not to torture, maltreat, or kill him.
>
> The true church of Christ has the characteristic that it suffers or endures persecution but does not persecute.
>
> To put to death an erring man before he has repented means to destroy his soul. Therefore, one should not kill him but wait for his conversion lest both body and soul be destroyed.[1]

It is interesting to observe that Bullinger does not repeat the accusation which he made in 1531 that the Anabaptists taught that a Christian was under no obligation to pay interest and tithes.[2]

Bullinger reprinted as an appendix to his book, Der Widertäufferen ursprung . . . , a booklet of unknown date and origin written undoubtedly by Zurich Anabaptists and entitled "A Vindication."[3] The authors spoke critically of the role of the clergy in inducing the government to persecute them:

> They preach against us before the secular authorities and the public in general; they urge and incite them to persecute and kill us. Some of them also advise us to forsake this way of life in order to avoid being driven from our homes. They call us fools for enduring persecution.

The Anabaptists often expressed resentment that Zwingli and the other Swiss and South German Reformers had abandoned their original "Anabaptist" views on war, the oath, separation of church and state, infant baptism, tithes, and the ban. The authors of the "Vindication," in repeating this accusation, revealed indirectly their own views of church-state relationships:

> The theologians of the established church have in the first period of their reformatory labors advocated the Christian, evangelical opinion that Christians should not protect themselves, or their evangelical doctrine, by worldly, carnal force, sword, weapons, or resistance, nor defend themselves in this way against their adversaries and opponents, but should use only the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit . . . ; and that they should not avenge themselves, not resist evil; the worldly, Mosaic sword should not be found among them: they should not seek justice before a

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[1] Ibid., pp. 165-68.

[2] Cf. Bullinger, Von dem unverschampten fräfel . . . , p. 144b.

[3] Verantwortung etlicher die man Toeuffer nennt, uff die fragen Warumb sy nit zur kirchen gangind," printed as an appendix in Bullinger, Der Widertöufferen vrsprung . . . , pp. 214-31.

> court of law on account of earthly possessions or honor, but should be willing to suffer and bear the cross, if they would be Christians. And this their former doctrine, is clearly founded on the New Testament Scriptures.[1]

Bullinger's summary in 1560 of Anabaptist thought, together with the "Vindication" from the brethren, provide at the end of the first generation of the movement the last and one of the best surveys of the views of the Anabaptists concerning the Christian's relationship to the state.

## Balthasar Hubmaier Submits a Minority Report

The Anabaptists of the Canton of Zurich adhered with few exceptions to the principles outlined in the Schleitheim Confession of Faith. These principles included the sharp separation of the church from the state and the world, the renunciation of militarism and physical coercion, refusal of the oath, and the insistence that a Christian could not be a magistrate. Balthasar Hubmaier, the Zwinglian Reformer of Waldshut and after Easter 1525 a leader among the Anabaptists, did not concur with the great majority of his brethren that a Christian must renounce the world so categorically.[2] It seems appropriate to consider Hubmaier's views here in connection with the movement in Zurich since he was an early disciple of the Zwinglian Reformation and then an intimate associate of the early leaders of Anabaptism in Zurich. Hubmaier was important in the development of Swiss Anabaptism because he was the most lucid exponent of believers' baptism.

In the autumn of 1524 while in voluntary exile at Schaffhausen, Hubmaier wrote a brief tract which was an eloquent plea for religious toleration. He entitled the pamphlet "Concerning Heretics and Those Who Burn Them" ("Von Ketzern und ihren Verbrennern").[1] Following are selections from the thirty-six points comprising the tract:

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 218b.

[2] The most complete and scholarly biography of Hubmaier, although it was published sixty years ago, is the volume by Johann Loserth, *Doctor Balthasar Hubmaier und die Anfänge der Wiedertäufe in Mähren* (Brünn: Rudolf M. Rohrer, 1893); cf. J. Loserth, "Balthasar Hubmaier," *ML*, II, 253-63; Wilhelm Mau, *Balthasar Hubmaier*, No. 40 of *Abhandlungen zur Mittleren und Neueren Geschichte* (Berlin: Walther Rothschild, 1912); W. Wiswedel, *Balthasar Hubmaier der Vorkämpfer für Glaubens- und Gewissensfreiheit* (Kassel: J. G. Oncken Nachfolger, 1939); Henry C. Vedder, *Balthasar Hübmaier: the Leader of the Anabaptists* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1905).

> 3. One should overcome [heretics] with holy knowledge, not angrily but softly. . . .
>
> 5. If they will not be taught by strong proofs or evangelic reasons, then let them be, and leave them rage. . . .
>
> 10. We should unceasingly contend, not with men but with their godless doctrine.
>
> 13. The inquisitors are the greatest heretics. . . .
>
> 14. Christ did not come to butcher, destroy, and burn. . . .
>
> 16. A Turk or a heretic is not conviced by our act, either with the sword or with fire, but only with patience and prayer.
>
> 20. It is no excuse (as they chatter) that they turn over the wicked to the secular power, for he who thus turns over the wicked sins more deeply.
>
> 25. Faith which flows from the gospel fountain, lives only in contests, and the rougher they become, so much the greater becomes faith.
>
> 34. But in that, after one book was burnt, Baruch by the express direction of Jeremiah, wrote another much better, we see the just punishment of God on the unrighteous burning. . . . It is a small thing to burn innocent paper, but to point out an error and to disprove it by Scripture, that is art.

He concluded his plea with the confident assertion that "truth is immortal" ("Die Wahrheit untödtlich ist"). The most novel idea advanced in this tract by Hubmaier was that even heresy should be granted freedom to express itself, because truth will emerge the victor in a free encounter with falsehood. He expressed readiness for an open contest among divergent viewpoints. Such an idea seems remarkably anticipatory of John Milton. Hubmaier, like many another Anabaptist, is one of the neglected heroes in the long struggle for religious freedom.

As the Reformer of Waldshut, Hubmaier succeeded in winning the city authorities and the citizenry to the evangelical cause. To realize his purposes, he worked in the closest collaboration with the city council. When Hubmaier became an Anabaptist at Eastertime 1525, he apparently carried with him into the movement a large portion of the population of Waldshut.[2] His cooperative relationship with the magistracy in Waldshut and his role as a civic as well as a religious leader made Hubmaier especially appreciative of the importance to the Christian of political institutions. He rallied the city in its desperate and futile effort to resist the invasion of Austrian troops, who came to stamp out the Reformation movement in the city.[1] Supported by the Waldshut authorities, Hubmaier lent his counsel and literary talents to the peasants in their unsuccessful revolt in 1525 against feudal overlords.[2] Late in 1525 the troops of King Ferdinand advanced upon Waldshut with the purpose of ridding the Catholic lands of Austria of this nest of the Reformation. Some of the recently baptized brethren refused to share in the military undertaking led by Hubmaier and the city council. Two Anabaptists, Ulrich Teck and Jacob Gross, were expelled from the city because they refused to take up arms in the defense of the city.[3] They had expressed willingness to support their city in noncombatant activities: guard duty, building fortifications, digging entrenchments, and paying taxes. The authorities, however, wanted only those citizens in the city who would give full combat service. The defense of Waldshut was a lost cause. In early December 1525 Hubmaier and many others were compelled to flee Waldshut and seek refuge in other lands. Hubmaier fled to Zurich where, however, he found no safe asylum. Within several months he again set forth on his wanderings.

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[1] The tract appears in English translation in Vedder, op. cit., pp. 84-88.

[2] Cf. Q. Zurich, No. 404.

Hubmaier arrived in early July 1526 in the town of Nikolsburg, Moravia, where Anabaptist refugees were welcomed by the tolerant nobility. Here Hubmaier remained until his arrest and death at the stake in 1528.[4] The last of his many writings was published at Nikolsburg in 1527 and entitled On the

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[1] Loserth, "Balthasar Hubmaier," ML, II, 355.

[2] Ibid., p. 356.

[3] Q. Zurich, No. 107.

[4] A copy of the death sentence, which was handed down in Vienna on March 10, 1528, is printed in Loserth, Doctor Balthasar Hubmaier . . ., Appendix No. 10, pp. 210-16.

Sword (Vom Schwert).[1] This book was an attempt to refute the views of the nonresistant Anabaptists and to explain the scriptural bases justifying a Christian magistracy. He dedicated his work to the Lords of Trebitz and Boskowitz, to whom he wished it explained "what from the beginning I have always and everywhere held concerning the magistracy."[2] The treatise is divided into fifteen sections, each headed by a Scripture text which the nonresistant Anabaptists relied upon to support their views. He was convinced that the brethren erred in a too rigid literalism and failed to compare Scripture with Scripture. He used the Old Testament extensively to justify his thesis that a Christian may and should serve in the magistracy and under that authority use the instruments of physical coercion. These views which Hubmaier articulated in June 1527 were unquestionably those which he had held some months earlier while at Waldshut and Zurich.

Hubmaier could not accept the fundamental principle of the majority of the brethren that the Christian must separate himself sharply from the world. To those who said that "a Christian may not bear the sword, since the kingdom of Christ is not of this world," he replied: "We are in the kingdom of the world, which is a kingdom of sin, death, and hell. . . . Christ alone could say with truth, 'My kingdom is not of this world.'"[3] The Christian, therefore, must accept his responsibilities in the world, including military service, duty as a magistrate, and swearing of the civil oath.

Hubmaier asserted that governments are ordained of God and that magistrates are His ministers or servants. The magistrate bears the temporal sword for "the protection of the innocent" and for a "terror to evildoers."[4] Although Hubmaier implied that these views were unacceptable to the brethren, it is undoubtedly correct to say that the nonresistant Anabaptists could accept fully Hubmaier's exposition here of Pauline doctrine.

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[1] An English translation of the treatise is printed in the appendix of the volume by Vedder, op. cit., pp. 273-310.

[2] Ibid., p. 276.

[3] Ibid., p. 279.

[4] Ibid., p. 281.

"Christ sanctions the sword," he taught, for the suppression of "self-constituted authority and wickedness."[1] No one, however, is permitted to employ the sword "except that he be regularly elected and appointed for that purpose."[2] "The magistrate may kill the evildoer, and in doing this he is guiltless according to the ordinance of God, and himself cannot be judged."[3] He added that anyone asked or commissioned to bear arms in behalf of the magistrate was "guiltless in helping him." If one refused the magistrate's request, he is disobedient to the ordinance of Christ and will incur eternal punishment. Hubmaier explained further: "Since neither the judge nor the executioner kill the evildoer, but the law of God, therefore are the judge, magistrate, and executioner called in the Scripture servants of God and not murderers."[4]

Hubmaier agreed with the other Anabaptists that a Christian ought to suffer wrong rather than bring suit in court for the redress of injury. However, he insisted that the "judge may and should be a Christian."[5] "Now a blind man can see," he asserted, "that a Christian may properly and with a good conscience sit in court and council, and judge and decide about temporal cases, although the wranglers and disputants sin. Yet they sin more if they take their cases before the unbelieving judge."[6] Not only the judge, but also the magistrate should be a Christian. Hubmaier posed the question: "Would an unbelieving magistrate be wise and skillful in preserving his people in a peaceful, quiet, godly, and honest life?" To this he replied emphatically: "You must, must, must always confess that a Christian magistrate will strive much more earnestly to do it than one who is not a Christian, who has at heart neither Christ, God, nor godliness, but only thinks how he may remain in his power, pomp, and ceremony."[1]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., pp. 280, 285.

[3] Ibid., p. 301.

[4] Ibid., p. 302.

[5] Ibid., p. 287.

[6] Ibid., pp. 286-87.

He had words of counsel for those Christians who served as magistrates. "The magistrate may and should punish, not alone from justice, but from the love that he bears to the evildoer."[2] He wields the sword "not out of hatred or envy, but according to the command of God."[3] No Christian should "lust for authority" or "contend to be a ruler," but rather he should flee the awesome responsibility. "If there is a frightful post to be found, outside the sphere of the preacher, it is the post of magistrate and secular ruler."[4] Scripture, he stated, "does not forbid the magistracy to the Christian, but teaches one not to quarrel, war, and fight for it, nor conquer land and people with the sword and force."[5] The magistrate should be a servant of his people. He, therefore, does not lord it over others. "We should not greatly desire to be saluted as Lords, like secular kings, princes, and lords. The magistracy is not lordship and knighthood, but service according to the ordinance of God."[6]

Hubmaier taught that Christians are to be submissive to their rulers and to respond instantly to the magistrate's call to give battle to enemies. Having affirmed the importance of submission to authority, Hubmaier cautiously built a case for the right to renounce obedience to an unfit ruler.

> The subjects should carefully test the spirit of their ruler, whether he is not incited by haughtiness, pride, intoxication, envy, hatred, or his own profit, rather than by love of the commonweal and the peace of society. When that is the case, he does not bear the sword according to the ordinance of God. But if you know that the ruler is punishing the evil only, so that the pious may remain in peace and uninjured, then help, counsel, stand by him, as often and as stoutly as you are able. . . .
>
> But if a ruler should be childish or foolish, yea, even entirely unfit to rule, one may with reason then escape from him and choose another. . . . But if it may not well be done, reasonably and peaceably and without great shame and rebellion, he should be suffered as one whom God has given us . . . to chastise us for our sins.[7]

Hubmaier may have been seeking here to justify the right under extreme circumstances of revolting against bad rulers. More probable, however, he was suggesting the recourse of emigrating if a prince's rule became intolerable.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 295. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 297. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 296.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 306. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 307. [6] *Ibid.* [7] *Ibid.*, p. 304.

In the conclusion Hubmaier asserted that not only Scripture but also natural reason support his views of the magistracy. Commenting on Romans 13:5, he stated,

> The secular power is ordained of God for the peace of society. Even if there were no Scripture about it to make us obedient to the government, our own conscience and knowledge tell us that. We should help, protect, defend the government, and pay service and taxes, so that we may remain in wordly peace with one another."[1]

The treatise, On the Sword, was Hubmaier's last major work. It was a brilliant statement of a viewpoint which, however, was held by only a small minority of the evangelical Anabaptists. Those who held Hubmaier's views concerning the magistracy and the sword were known among the Moravian Anabaptists as the "sword-users" ("Schwertler").

## Conclusion

The Anabaptists of the Canton of Zurich held views concerning the civil authority which were best expressed in such writings as the September 1524 letter to Thomas Müntzer, the court testimony of Felix Manz, and the Schleitheim Confession of Faith. Further evidence that they held these views is confirmed by Heinrich Bullinger, opponent of the movement, in his history of the origins of Anabaptism. Briefly summarized, the principles of the Zurich Anabaptists concerning the state were as follows: (1) the kingdom of Christ is categorically separated from the kingdom of this world; (2) the Christian is essentially a citizen of the kingdom of Christ and not of this world; (3) the worldly government is ordained of God for the punishment of evil and the protection of good; (4) the Christian, however, may not serve as a magistrate because of the ethical compromises inherent in the responsibilities of office; (5) the state had absolutely no rights nor responsibilities of supervision, interference, and coercion in the affairs of the church--thus, a complete separation of church and state; (6) an individual's faith is a gift of God and, therefore, cannot be subjected to the coercive control of the civil authorities--thus, a conception of freedom of conscience; (7) the Christian may not bear arms, nor employ other instruments of physical coercion; (8) the Christian swears no civil oaths; (9) the Christian does not seek justice in behalf of his property or honor before a court of law; (1) although the government is ordained to bear the sword, it should not subject wrongdoers to capital punishment ("stain its hands with blood"); (11) the Christian is obedient to the government in so far as the claims of the magistracy are not contrary to the will of God; (12) the Christian pays interest, customs, taxes, tithes as required by the government; (13) the Christian acknowledges that those who are faithful to the commandments of God will be persecuted but the Christian will suffer all violence and punishment patiently and without resisting.

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[1] Ibid., p. 309.

In the first days of the movement, when there was an intense spirit of discipleship and missionary compulsion, some of the Anabaptists may have visualized a new apostolic order of things without the secular magistracy. Later the Anabaptists appear to have accepted the fact that they were destined to be a tiny remnant in a hostile world. They then seemed quicker to acknowledge the authority of the magistracy and their obedience to it. Anabaptists recognized that the institution of government was required by all non-Christians for the maintenance of peace and order. It was only rarely stated, by Anabaptists, however, that the government fulfilled a function for the true Christian, except in so far as the magistrate was ordained "to protect the good." The Anabaptists would have been pleased with a government which recognized complete freedom of conscience and separation of church and state, which permitted the free preaching of the Gospel and the gathering together of voluntary brotherhoods of Christians, and which renounced aggressive warfare toward foreign powers and the methods of capital punishment toward domestic wrongdoers.

The Anabaptists met the challenge of persecution in a variety of ways. They petitioned for recognition of their rights to print their literature, to hold public disputations, and to be granted safe-conduct papers. Despite the ban on Anabaptist activity, the leaders did not cease in their missionary effort. Some returned from banishment, declaring that no government could forbid them from its territory because the "earth is the Lord's." Some broke out of their prisons. Many carried on their Anabaptist activities in hiding, continually eluding the authorities. Some capitulated to the demands of the government, while others remained intransigent, even to their death.

Ulrich Zwingli's was the most forceful voice raised in opposition to the Anabaptists. His Refutation contains a summation of most of the charges directed against the movement. The basic premise from which all accusations against the Anabaptists derived was that the territorial community was fundamentally a Christian society in which the church and the state were but two aspects of the community. This organic whole required unity and uniformity among its members. Fundamental religious or political dissent could not be tolerated for fear that these diversities might spread into other areas of the common life and thus destroy the order, unity, and peace of the Christian community. Zwingli and most of his contemporaries lacked understanding and appreciation for the possibilities of variety within unity in a political society. From this fundamental conception of a Corpus Christianum proceeded the criticisms of the civil authorities toward the Anabaptists: (1) they were deficient in love for the community, for issues of doctrine and ethics should be decided not by small self-constituted groups, but by the community as a whole in the council; (2) the seamless robe of the Church of Christ was rent by the factionalism and sectarianism of the Anabaptists; (3) the missionary zeal of Anabaptists and the agitation provoked by their absolutist ethic caused unrest in the community; (4) the vigor of the Anabaptist competition gave aid and comfort to the Catholic minority; (5) the refusal of the

Anabaptists to assume the usual responsibilities of citizenship--bearing arms for the state, swearing the oath of civic loyalty, obeying all the mandates of the council, and accepting the duties of public office--all these contributed to a spirit of disobedience among the people toward the magistracy; (6) if this disobedience and defiance of the council continued unchecked, it would endanger the security and efficient operation of all government. Zwingli and the authorities never explicitly expressed that which was undoubtedly one of the most deep rooted of all their fears, namely, that the Anabaptists, if they were given freedom to grow, might become a populous movement and thus a serious competitor to the established church. It would jeopardize the carefully laid plans for a new reformed church order.

Knowing that many people saw the Anabaptists as a gentle and peaceful folk and not as arch-villains, the civil authorities often felt compelled to explain that despite the innocent appearance of the movement, it would eventually manifest itself as a great menace. Once they were sufficiently numerous, they would discard their sheep's clothing and appear as the ravening wolves they actually were; they would then renounce all allegiance to the authority of the magistracy.

Zwingli and the civil authorities made additional accusations which they no doubt knew to be false or at least distortions of the facts, but which were nonetheless made because it was thought to be effective propaganda. Among these were the following charges: (1) that the Anabaptists favored the abolition of all civil government; (2) that they refused to pay taxes, interest, and tithes and urged others to do the same; (3) that they were plotting rebellion; (4) that they were murderers; (5) that they endangered the public moral order with their depraved personal conduct.

The legal authority prompting the persecution was not directly or self-consciously derived from the resolutions of the Confederation nor the imperial mandates, although one notes frequent incidental references to the imperial law against heretics and Anabaptists. The persecution seems to have been initiated by the local civil authorities simply as the only response which they could devise to meet the challenge of dissent.

The Zurich authorities employed a great variety of methods of punishment and persuasion to suppress Anabaptism, methods which set the pattern for many of the programs of containment and persecution in other cities and principalities. (1) Methods of persuasion were employed: public and private disputations, individual counseling by the clergy and public officials, the publication of literature designed to refute Anabaptist principles, the requirement that abjuring Anabaptists make public confession in the local churches, the pointed warnings from the pulpit and the council chamber, and the public reading and posting of letters and mandates. The propaganda offensive vacillated between two extremes: one that emphasized that the Anabaptists were a good and pious people, but unfortunately mistaken in certain external matters, and the other that the Anabaptists were a violent, seditious people plotting revolution. (2) Reforms were introduced in the established church so that the competition of the Anabaptists could be met more effectively. (3) Methods of confinement and physical coercion were employed: imprisonment in varying degrees of rigor, torture, flogging, and drowning. (3) Economic sanctions were employed: the imposition of fines of varying weight, the levying of court and prison costs, the requiring of the posting of heavy bonds, and the confiscation of property. (4) Social-economic sanctions were utilized, such as the requirement which compelled citizens to refuse Anabaptists lodging, food, and hospitality. (5) Among the other coercive measures used were proclamations forbidding Anabaptist meetings, banishment from the territory of Zurich, and the extraction of oaths from Anabaptists and abjurers that they would keep the peace. (6) Friends and patrons of the Anabaptists were singled out for punishment or were reduced in power so that the movement could be more effectively isolated and suppressed. (7) The most severe punishment was leveled against the leaders of the Anabaptists, those considered "carriers of the disease."

The civil authorities implemented the above program of persuasion and coercion with a variety of administrative techniques. The city council kept in the closest liaison with its appointed officials in the localities so that the tactics and strategy of suppression could be properly coordinated. Espionage agents and vigilante forces were deputized to ferret out and arrest Anabaptists. The Zurich council sought to rally the support of other governments for the purpose of adopting uniform measures of suppression.

Just as the Anabaptist movement appeared first in Zurich, so the persecution was launched first in Zurich. The city had decisively suppressed the movement before many other cities were seriously troubled with Anabaptists. Zurich began its attack cautiously and with a minimum display of force and then gradually intensified the coercive measures against the movement. Zurich emerged victorious in its struggle with Anabaptism for several reasons: (1) Zwingli led the attack on the Anabaptists with a driving passion in which he grasped every weapon in the government arsenal of power; (2) Zwingli and the council diagnosed the problem at an early date and promptly began applying counter measures; (3) the government concentrated on ridding the canton of the leaders of the movement; (4) in their effort to crush the movement the authorities showed little hesitation in applying severe punishments such as long and harsh imprisonments, torture, and executions of key figures. Thus, with a few years of intense application, the Zurich authorities were able to contain and then substantially suppress the Anabaptist movement. Thereafter, the movement, reduced to quietistic ways, persisted in only a few isolated rural areas.

# CHAPTER V

## SCHAFFHAUSEN

The Anabaptist movement followed in the wake of the Zwinglian Reformation as it overflowed into the cities and regions bordering the Canton of Zurich. Anabaptism in such areas as Appenzell, St. Gall, Schaffhausen, and Waldshut was derived directly from Zurich, which was also the major disseminating center for the Swiss Reformation. Zurich, under the strong leadership of Zwingli had an immediate concern that Anabaptist dissent should be contained and suppressed not only in her own canton but also in the territories of her neighbors.

Schaffhausen joined the Confederation in 1501 after the Swiss had emerged victorious from the Swabian war.[1] She was in a militarily exposed position, being surrounded on three sides by German and Roman Catholic territory. Her only geographical link with the Confederation was her common border with Zurich. This made Schaffhausen particularly sensitive to pressures from the German states and the Empire.[2] Schaffhausen was a natural bridge of transit for the peripatetic Anabaptist leaders traveling between Zurich and the cities of South Germany. Governed earlier by her abbots and then by the Hapsburgs, Schaffhausen had been since 1411 a guild-ruled town.[3] The center of authority was the Small Council of twenty-six, supplemented by the Great Council of eighty-four members. The driving force in the Schaffhausen

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[1] For a copy of the pact of union between Schaffhausen and the Confederation see Oechsli, Quellenbuch . . . , No. 101.

[2] Jakob Wipf, Reformationsgeschichte der Stadt und Landschaft Schaffhausen (Zurich: Orell Fussli, 1929), p. 196.

[3] Egli, Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte, I, 114.

Reformation was Sebastian Hofmeister, a devoted follower of Zwingli, who began his aggressive onslaught on Catholic ceremonies in 1522.[1] In the same year the council extended by mandate its control over the ecclesiastical life and moral conduct of the community, yet did not commit itself concerning the Reformation.[2] The preaching of Hofmeister was officially protected, but no changes were permitted in the church order.[3] The peasant disorders of 1524 and 1525 strengthened the hand of the Catholic party in the Small Council. When in August 1525 the guilds of the fishermen and vine dressers demanded an immediate introduction of the Reformation, Hofmeister was held responsible for this "presumptuous behavior" of the lower guilds and was asked to leave the city.[4] One of the reasons given for his expulsion was that he had preached against the baptism of young children.[5] The artisan classes continued after 1525 to clamor for a Reformation, begging the Great Council to assert its authority.[6] The Reformation was not introduced, however, until October 1529 after diplomatic pressure had been applied by Basel, Bern, and Zurich.[7]

The Anabaptist message was introduced into Schaffhausen early in 1525. Conrad Grebel, who spent the months of February and March in the city, sought especially to win the clergymen to the cause. Grebel was soon joined by Johannes Brötli and Wilhelm Reublin, both who had been expelled from Zurich. The three conferred with the two leading clergymen, Sebastian Hofmeister and Sebastian Meyer.[8] Brötli reported the impression that Hofmeister agreed with them concerning baptism.[9] Hearing a rumor that the Schaffhausen council planned a public debate on baptism, the Zurich council hastened to inform her sister council on February 8, 1525, that a debate on the question had been held in Zurich. The conclusion was reached, explained Zurich, that infant baptism was justified and, therefore, a mandate had been issued requiring the baptism of all infants.[1] Zurich requested Schaffhausen to postpone the proposed debate on baptism until Zwingli's forthcoming book on the subject was published. If the debate were to be held, however, Zurich asked to be informed of the date of the disputation so that Zurich councilors and clergymen could be represented. The Schaffhausen council replied on February 10, 1525, that no disputation was to be held and that it had "no intention at the present time to abolish the custom of baptizing infants."[2] The following day the council issued a mandate requesting "ecclesiastical unity" and demanding that all infants be baptized.[3]

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[1] Wipf, op. cit., pp. 124-25.

[2] Ibid., pp. 125-26.

[3] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 384.

[4] Wipf, op. cit., pp. 201-3.

[5] Ibid., p. 202.

[6] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 385.

[7] Wipf, op. cit., pp. 271-89.

[8] Brotli to Fridli Schumacher, Hallau, after February 5, 1525, Q. Zurich, No. 36, p. 45.

[9] Ibid.

Johannes Brötli and Wilhelm Reublin carried the Anabaptist movement into the region of the Klettgau west of Schaffhausen. Here in the village of Hallau Brötli reported a "great harvest but few reapers."[4] The ever-alert Zurich council heard of Brötli's activity in the Klettgau and promptly warned Schaffhausen on April 4, 1525, that the Anabaptist was causing "unrest and disobedience" among the people.[5] The council sent soldiers to seize and imprison Brötli but the villagers of Hallau would not permit this to happen.[6] Probably he continued his ministry for a time in Hallau. The only further information concerning Brötli is an item in the *Martyrs' Mirror* which records that he was burned at the stake in 1528.[1] The Klettgau remained for more than a decade an area of Anabaptist strength.[2]

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[1] C. A. Bächtold, "Die Schaffhauser Wiedertäufer in der Reformationszeit," No. 7 of Beiträge zur Vaterländischen Geschichte (Schaffhausen: Paul Schoch, 1900), p. 81.

[2] Q. Zurich, No. 40.

[3] Bächtold, op. cit., p. 82.

[4] Brötli to Schumacher, Hallau, after February 5, 1525, Q. Zurich, No. 36, p. 45.

[5] Copy of the communication of Zurich to Schaffhausen, April 4, 1525, in C. A. Cornelius, Die Wiedertäufe, Vol. II of Geschichte des Münsterischen Aufruhrs (Leipzig: T. D. Weigel, 1860), pp. 249-50.

[6] The exchange of correspondence between the Schaffhausen council and the citizens of Hallau is reproduced in Bächtold, op. cit., pp. 84-85.

Conrad Grebel failed in his attempt to convince Sebastian Hofmeister and the other clergymen to become Anabaptist disciples.[3] Felix Manz also came to Schaffhausen in late March and conferred with Hofmeister, but apparently to no avail.[4] At a later hearing in Zurich Hofmeister reported that in this interview Manz had explained that a Christian may not use the sword and that a judge or a councilman cannot be a Christian.[5]

In the year 1526 the council began to devote increased attention to the Anabaptist problem.[6] A mandate was issued on February 16, 1526, ordering again that all infants should be baptized.[7] Apparently the authorities did not unduly molest the movements of the Anabaptists in the Canton of Schaffhausen. This is evidenced by the fact that an Anabaptist conference could be held at Schleitheim, three miles distance from the village of Hallau, where a group of leaders formulated on February 24, 1527, the widely disseminated Seven Articles of Faith. On April 15, 1527, the council appointed the two burgomasters and several other councilmen to deal with issues relating to the Anabaptists.[8] An increasing number of Anabaptists were subjected to punishment.[9] The punishments were comparatively mild: brief imprisonment, fines, and banishment. The clergymen sometimes visited the dissenters in prison.

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[1] *Martyrs' Mirror*, p. 427. The spelling of the name in the *Martyrs' Mirror* follows the Dutch form: "Hans Pretle." Although the place of death is not given in the *Martyrs' Mirror* account, it seems probable that he was executed in Hapsburg territory where the authorities had a predilection for this method in disposing of dissenters.

[2] Cf. Leonhard von Muralt, "Ein Versammlungsort der Täufer im Klettgau," *Zwingliana*, V, No. 4 (1930), p. 224.

[3] Bender, *Conrad Grebel*, pp. 140-42.

[4] *Q. Zurich*, No. 121, p. 123.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Bächtold, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 98.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 99.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

One Anabaptist was required to appear in the principal church and read a statement of recantation which the council had prepared.[1] Zurich warned Augsburg and Constance on August 10, 1527, to be on guard for the "arch-Anabaptist" Hans Denck who was enroute northward through Schaffhausen and Constance.[2] Anabaptist leaders were marked men.

Schaffhausen was not a signatory to the anti-Anabaptist Concordat of 1527.[3] However, the council, probably under the stimulus of this concordat, promulgated a mandate on September 13, 1527, which forbade anyone to attend an Anabaptist meeting or give refuge to an Anabaptist.[4] The first Anabaptist to be executed in the canton was Hans Rüeger, a cabinet maker, who was beheaded in November 1527.[5] Apparently Rüeger was condemned more for his alleged association with the restless artisan classes than for his Anabaptist sympathies. The Anabaptists had their adherents among the city's nobility. Beatrice von Fulach was summoned before the council on October 23, 1528, where she reluctantly renounced her Anabaptism.[6] Through the intercession of influential relatives and friends she was released with no punishment. At the same hearing Hans von Waldkirch, who later from 1532-42 was burgomaster of the city, was reprimanded for receiving Anabaptists into his home.[7] The second Anabaptist to be executed was Hans Schuffelberg, who had come to Schaffhausen from Gruningen, Canton Zurich, where he had been imprisoned one year and fifteen weeks.[8] He was beheaded in April 1529.[9] Soon after this execution the council received a copy of Charles V's mandate of April 23, 1529, against the Anabaptists.[10] Imperial authorities still considered Schaffhausen as subject to imperial law. There is no clear evidence that this mandate determined

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

[2] *Q. Zurich*, No. 227, pp. 254-55.

[3] Bächtold, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 103.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] *Q. Zurich*, No. 274, p. 291.

[9] Bächtold, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-4.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

Schaffhausen policy. So many Anabaptists were imprisoned in early 1530 that the council had to double the number of councilmen assigned the task of examining the prisoners.[1]

Eleven clergymen in a petition to the council in 1532 stated that the Anabaptists felt compelled to separate themselves from the established church because "one perceives no amendment of life among us but on the contrary an increase of all the vices."[2] The council's answer was a mandate on July 29, 1532, enumerating a long list of public vices and threatening with punishment anyone guilty of such misconduct and demanding stricter enforcement of existing laws against the Anabaptists.[3] The years from 1533 to 1536 brought a marked increase in the Anabaptist movement. In 1535 the council had to deal with the Anabaptist problem on at least forty-one occasions.[4] A new mandate was issued on March 31, 1535, which stated that the Anabaptists "must migrate." If they planned to migrate they were promised no further punishment and were given permission to depart at their convenience and to take with them their possessions.[5] Meanwhile the prisons were always full. Torture and flogging were occasionally employed by the authorities.[6] "Anabaptist hunts" were organized by law officials to ferret out Anabaptists.[7] One of the major successes of the authorities during these years was to elicit a recantation from the Anabaptist leader, Martin Weninger.[8] Long after other cities had abandoned all confidence in disputations as a method of defeating the Anabaptists, Schaffhausen continued to provide for such debates. Disputations were held in 1535, 1543, 1559, and even as late as 1577.[9] The mandates against the Anabaptists were renewed periodically. The punishment emphasized in each mandate was banishment.

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[1] Bächtold, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 107-8.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 112, 113.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 115-16, 117.

Schaffhausen had a vigorous Anabaptist movement during the 1530's when most cities and regions had conquered the problem. At least two reasons may be offered in explanation. (1) The Anabaptists could not be easily extinguished because they were so deeply rooted in certain rural areas, particularly the Klettgau and Randen. (2) The Anabaptists received comparatively lenient treatment from the city council, notably during the tenure in office of the burgomaster, Hans von Waldkirch. On four occasions in 1535 the clergy wrote to Zurich complaining that the Schaffhausen council showed no vigor in prosecuting Anabaptists.[1] Von Waldkirch indignantly denied these charges in a letter to Heinrich Bullinger in November 1535.[2] Nevertheless the civil authorities were most reluctant to play the role of persecutors. The government of Schaffhausen used methods in handling the Anabaptist problem which were similar to those employed in other cantons. The council, however, was somewhat more moderate in its attitude and persecuted with less thoroughness than other states. Hence, the movement had a longevity in Schaffhausen not enjoyed in many areas.

In terms of the history of the Anabaptist encounter with the state, the most important contributions to come forth from the canton were several statements of Anabaptist faith. One such statement was the Vindication of Anabaptism which Martin Weninger presented upon request to a clergyman in 1535.[3] The author gives the "reasons why the Anabaptists separate themselves from the churches, worship services, and sermons." He criticized sharply the moral laxity of laity and clergy in the established church. He objected particularly to the fact that the clergy was state supported: "Now when such hirelings, shepherds who have bargained for a definite wage, see the wolf coming they flee and do not lay down their lives for the sake of the sheep."

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[1] Ibid., pp. 116-17.

[2] Ibid., p. 117.

[3] An edited English translation of this treatise is available in John C. Wenger's article, "Martin Weninger's Vindication of Anabaptism, 1535," MQR, XXII (July, 1948), 180-87.

Weninger made the charge, often repeated by Anabaptists, that the state clergy were "hirelings of the rulers." He said that they were, therefore, incapable of speaking prophetically for they had to "tickle the ears" of their state paymasters. In the concluding paragraph he declared that the Anabaptists were a people who renounced aspirations of power, who were prepared to endure persecution, and who lived nonresistantly, "following the example of Christ."

The most notable document of Anabaptist faith and practice to be preserved from this whole period was the confession of faith prepared by a conference of Anabaptist brethren in the village of Schleitheim on February 24, 1527. This statement, formulated under the direction of Michael Sattler, was entitled "A Brotherly Union of a Number of Children of God Concerning Seven Articles."[1] The content of the seven articles has been briefly summarized in an earlier chapter. Attention now will be centered on those articles treating the Christian's relationship to the state.

A fundamental theme pervading the confession is that true Christians are disciples of Christ who have been called out and separated from the world. This is brought to sharp focus in the fourth article concerning "separation." The confession reads: "For truly all creatures are in but two classes, good and bad, believing and unbelieving, darkness and light, the world and those who have come out of the world . . . Christ and Belial; and none can have part with the other." The Christian is admonished therefore to "withdraw from Babylon and the earthly Egypt." By this is meant "all popish and antipopish works and church services, meetings and church attendance, drinking houses, civic affairs, the commitments made in unbelief. . . ." A natural consequence of this separation is that "there will also unquestionably fall from us the unchristian, devilish weapons of force--such as sword, armor and the like, and all their use either for friends or against one's enemies. . . ."

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[1] An edited English translation of this confession is available in Wenger, "The Schleitheim Confession of Faith," op. cit., 243-53.

In the sixth article the brethren expressed their agreement that the state is a God-ordained arrangement.

> The sword is ordained of God outside the perfection of Christ. It punishes and puts to death the wicked, and guards and protects the good. In the Law the sword was ordained for the punishment of the wicked and for their death, and the same sword is now ordained to be used by the worldly magistrates.

Within the brotherhood no physical coercion is employed; "only the ban is used for a warning and for the excommunication of the one who has sinned." Three questions are posed concerning the use of the sword. (1) May one kill the wicked in order to protect the good, this being done for the sake of love? The unanimous reply is that one should learn of Christ, who was "meek and lowly in heart." As Christ forgave the heathen woman taken in adultery, so his followers should show mercy and forgiveness to all who are wicked, warning offenders to sin no more. (2) May a Christian pass sentence "in worldly dispute and strife such as unbelievers have with one another?" The answer again is that as Christ refused to pass judgment in the dispute over an inheritance, so Christians should also refuse to pass judgment in worldly controversies. (3) Shall one be a magistrate if chosen? The answer given is that Christ fled from those who wished to make him king. Moreover, Christ "forbids the employment of the force of the sword. . . ." It is explained that Christ suffered rather than ruled. Reasons are given why "it is not appropriate for a Christian to serve as a magistrate:"

> The government magistracy is according to the flesh, but the Christians' is according to the Spirit; their houses and dwelling remain in this world but the Christians' are in heaven; their citizenship is in this world, but the Christians' citizenship is in heaven; the weapons of their conflict and war are carnal and against the flesh only, but the Christians' weapons are spiritual, against the fortification of the devil. The worldlings are armed with steel and iron, but the Christians are armed with the armor of God. . . .

In the concluding article the brethren agreed that the Christian may swear no oath. The teaching of Jesus was declared to be normative: "Let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." They admitted that the oath was commanded of God under the Old

Testament Law as "a confirmation among those who were quarreling or making promises." It was to be performed "only in truth, not falsely." The brethren explained that "Christ, who teaches the perfection of the Law, prohibits all swearing to His followers, whether true or false--neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by Jerusalem, nor by our head." They added that by swearing "we cannot change even the very least. . . ." In answer to the argument that the apostles Peter and Paul swore to the truth, the brethren indicated that the apostles testified but swore no oath: "Testifying and swearing are two different things. For when a person swears he is in the first place promising future things. . . . But when a person bears testimony he is testifying about the present."

The Schleitheim Confession of Faith is significant for it was widely distributed among members of the brotherhood. Zwingli wrote in his Elenchus, July 31, 1527: "Although you have never published them, yet hardly any of your people exist who have not a copy of these well founded laws, as you call them."[1] Thereafter the principles of the Schleitheim Confession, formulated in a village of the Canton of Schaffhausen, were to be heard again and again as the Anabaptists expounded their convictions in letters, writings, disputations, and trials.

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[1] Selected Works of Zwingli, p. 177.

# CHAPTER VI

## ST. GALL AND APPENZELL

St. Gall in 1525 was a thriving town of five thousand, famed abroad for its linen industry. Surrounding the town was the territory of the prince-abbot of St. Gall. Since the middle of the fifteenth century the town had been independent of the control of the prince-abbot and in alliance with the Swiss Confederation. Gradually during the Reformation period the town encroached upon the territories of the prince-abbot. The textile industry, which exported its products to all parts of Europe, brought the town great prosperity and contributed to a cosmopolitan atmosphere.[1] The town was governed by the guilds through a Small Council of twenty-four and a Great Council of ninety.[2] Zwingli exercised a continuous and decisive influence upon the Reformation developments in St. Gall. The initial leaders in reform were Joachim von Watt, better known as Vadian, and Johannes Kessler. On April 5, 1524, the city council authorized that all preaching thereafter should be of a Biblical, evangelical nature.[3] Some clergymen soon ceased to read the mass. The official decision came in 1528 when Reformation-minded men gained control of the Great Council. This permitted the burgomaster, Vadian, to press through on July 17, 1528, the abolition of the mass and the establishment of a Reformed church order.[4]

The uniqueness of the Anabaptist movement in St. Gall is to be found in the fact that for a few months it achieved a mass popularity in an urban environment. This was possible because of the city's initial policy of toleration. Anabaptism received a particularly welcome response in this town because its Reformation was characterized by widespread, voluntary participation of the laity. Anabaptism was congenial in spirit to this lay emphasis. This urban piety expressed itself in the custom of inviting to the city popular Bible lecturers who addressed throngs in the open air, inns, and guild halls.[1] Balthasar Hubmaier, who was one of these guest lecturers, made a profound impression on the populace in the spring of 1523.[2] A circle of scholars met regularly with Vadian for the critical study of Scripture.[3] A number of citizens invited Johannes Kessler, a young scholar who had just returned from studies in Wittenberg, to conduct classes in Bible study.[4] The response of the citizens apparently was enthusiastic.[5] Zwingli voiced his approval to Vadian.[6] Some, however, viewed these meetings under lay leaders as most irregular.[7] Early in September 1524 the city received a request from the Swiss diet that Kessler's meetings should be prohibited.[8] Accordingly the St. Gall council asked him to cease his "reading," with which request he complied.[9] The members of this Bible study circle thereupon asked Wolfgang Schorant, known as Ulimann, to be their "reader."[10] Ulimann, who was of a prominent St. Gall family, had formerly been a monk. The meetings continued to grow as the council announced its neutrality concerning such activity.

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[1] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 242-43; Egli, Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte, I, 119.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., p. 349.

[4] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 385-86.

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[1] Egli, Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte, I, 123-25.

[2] Fridolin Sichers Chronik, ed. by Ernst Gotzinger, Vol. XX of Mitteilungen zur vaterländischen Geschichte (St. Gall, 1885), pp. 61, 188; Sabbata, p. 106.

[3] Ibid. [4] Egli, Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte, I, 345.

[5] Sabbata, pp. x-xi, 144.

[6] Zwingli to Vadian, Zurich, February 24, 1524, ZW, VIII, 153.

[7] Fridolin Sichers Chronik, p. 188.

[8] Die Eidgenössischen Abschiede aus dem Zeitraume von 1521 bis 1528, p. 487.

[9] Egli, Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte, I, 353.

[10] Ibid., p. 354.

These meetings for Bible study gradually were converted into Anabaptist congregations. Ulimann traveled to Schaffhausen in February 1525 where he was baptized by Conrad Grebel.[1] Under Ulimann's leadership the meetings took on an increasingly Anabaptist coloration. Great numbers attended the meetings which were held in the large guild hall of the weavers.[2] Disturbed by the popular response to these lay meetings, officials asked Ulimann to conduct his Bible classes henceforth in the St. Laurentius Church.[3] He refused because he knew that his freedom of teaching would be subjected there to the censure of a council-appointed commission. Ulimann was soon joined by other Anabaptist evangelists. Conrad Grebel spent about two weeks in St. Gall preaching to and baptizing great numbers.[4] Eberli Bolt, who came from the Canton of Appenzell, followed Grebel in the role of the popular evangelist. His preaching was attended by such throngs that some of the council became alarmed.[5] Vadian stated that among the councilmen were some "who were not displeased with that which the Anabaptists did."[6] The council decided on the Friday following Easter that Bolt should be invited to the house of the burgomaster, who should ask him to leave St. Gall.[7] He left the town as requested. In the Canton of Schwyz he was seized by the authorities and burned at the stake on May 29, 1525, the first Anabaptist martyr.[8] It is uncertain whether he was executed for his Anabaptist views or because he was an evangelical missionary in a Catholic canton. Johannes Krüsi, who had also been an Anabaptist apostle in Appenzell and St. Gall, was the second martyr of the brotherhood. He was burned at the stake in Lucerne on July 27, 1525.[1]

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[1] _Sabbata_, p. 144.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 145.

[3] Egli, _Die St. Galler Täufer_, p. 23.

[4] _Sabbata_, p. 145.

[5] Egli, _Die St. Galler Täufer_, p. 27.

[6] Von Watt, _op. cit._, II, 405.

[7] Copy of the council's order in Egli, _Die St. Galler Täufer_, Document No. 1, p. 55.

[8] _Sabbata_, p. 146; _Heinrich Bullingers Reformationsgeschichte_, I, 289.

The Anabaptist movement was in the full flower of its development in the spring of 1525. An Anabaptist reported to the brethren in Zollikon that at least five hundred had been baptized in the city and countryside.[2] Attendance declined in the established churches.[3] The Anabaptists were viewed approvingly by their neighbors as a "completely humble, pious" people.[4] Johannes Kessler wrote that "they carried no weapons, no sword or other weapon, nothing more than a pointless bread knife, saying that these things belonged to the wolf's nature and should not be found on the sheep. They would never swear an oath, not even upon demand of the government."[5] Wolfgang Ulimann was finally summoned before the council on April 25, 1525, to give account of this new Anabaptist faith.[6] Impressed by Ulimann's testimony, the council admitted that his teachings raised weighty problems which would have to be studied. The council asked him "for the sake of brotherly love to stand still in the observance of baptism and the Lord's Supper" until the issues were clarified.[7] Ulimann declined to comply with the request. The council then offered him three days in which to change his mind before being banished. Four others were also so warned. Persecution had begun.

On May 12 the council requested the Anabaptists and two clergymen to submit in eight days written statements defending their respective doctrinal positions.[1] Meanwhile the Anabaptists were ordered under penalty of imprisonment to "stand still" in the observance of baptism. Both sides failed to produce a statement in the time ordered, although the Anabaptists had requested Conrad Grebel to prepare one for them. Vadian, who had once been inclined toward Anabaptist views,[2] stepped in to act in behalf of the clergy.[3] The council granted the Anabaptists two weeks to prepare a reply to Vadian's lengthy statement. Meanwhile, Zwingli was projecting himself into the controversy. Fearful of where Vadian stood on the Anabaptist issue, Zwingli had written to Vadian warning him not to be led astray by Grebel's teachings.[4] Zwingli dedicated his Book on Baptism to the burgomaster, councillors, and citizens of St. Gall. In the preface he warned them not to tolerate a withdrawal of any portion of the population from the established church.[5] On May 28, the day after the printing was completed, Zwingli dispatched a shipment of these books to St. Gall. In an accompanying letter to Vadian he urged that the Anabaptists should be "opposed zealously"--the issue not being baptism but "revolt, faction, heresy."[6] Conrad Grebel was also aware that a fateful decision was about to be made by the St. Gall council and that Vadian's influence would be decisive. On May 30 Grebel wrote his old friend, appealing to Vadian's conscience to prevent persecution.[7] He warned: "Beware, beware of innocent blood." Grebel begged him to "withdraw from the bloody party of Zwingli." He appealed to Vadian not to allow the fear of persecution, nor the thought of lost wealth or status to dissuade him from obeying the divine truth. Grebel placed the issue squarely before Vadian: "All, or at least most of the fault is yours, if there shall be passed against them [the Anabaptists] any decree of imprisonment, heavy fine, outlawry, or death." Grebel had entertained hopes that St. Gall would continue to tolerate the brethren. He, therefore, viewed with anxiety the prospect of the Zurich pattern of persecution being extended to St. Gall: "If you are not willing to stand with the brethren, at least do not resist them; do not give to other states the example of persecution."

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[1] *Sabbata*, p. 147; von Watt, *op. cit.*, III, 203.

[2] Gabriel Giger to Jörg Schad and the "brethren in Zollikon," St. Gall, Spring of 1525, *Q. Zurich*, No. 66, p. 75.

[3] *Sabbata*, p. 148.

[4] Johann J. Simler, *Sammlung alter und neuer Urkunden zur Beleuchtung der Kirchengeschichte vornehmlich des Schweizerlandes* (Zurich: Johann Kapar Ziegler, 1760), I, 135.

[5] *Sabbata*, pp. 147-48. For similar statements see *Fridolin Sichers Chronik*, p. 191, and von Watt, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, Part 2, p. 405.

[6] Egli, *Die St. Galler Täufer*, Document No. 2, p. 55.

[7] *Ibid.*, Document No. 3, p. 55. [8] *Ibid.*, Document No. 4, p. 56.

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[1] Ibid., Document No. 4, p. 56.

[2] Horsch, "The Swiss Brethren in St. Gall and Appenzell," MQR, VII (October, 1933), 212-13.

[3] Egli, Die St. Galler Täufer, Document No. 5, p. 56.

[4] Zwingli to Vadian, Zurich, March 31, 1525, ZW, VIII, 313-14.

[5] Horsch, "The Swiss Brethren in St. Gall and Appenzell," op. cit., p. 213.

[6] Zwingli to Vadian, Zurich, May 28, 1525, ZW, VIII, 331-32.

[7] Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, May 30, 1525, Q. Zurich, No. 70, pp. 78-79.

When Zwingli's Book on Baptism arrived in Zurich it was publicly read in St. Laurentius Church.[1] The Anabaptists, who were required to hear the reading of the book, after a while walked out of the church in protest. Kessler recorded that the audience concluded that "the truth of God was on the side of the Anabaptists."[2] On June 5 the Great Council met to consider the fate of the Anabaptists. A letter from Conrad Grebel and the statement from Vadian were presented.[3] On the following day the council decided against the Anabaptists and promulgated a schedule of punishments:[4] (1) The teaching and practice of Anabaptism in the city and countryside were strictly forbidden, on pain of exile. (2) All Anabaptist meetings were prohibited. (3) Men who were baptized were to be fined ten pounds and women five pounds. These decrees of the Great Council were ordered read publicly at St. Laurentius Church. The council backed up these laws with force. One June 8 and 9 two hundred trusted men were sworn in the council and ordered to be prepared to come armed to the city hall at a moment's notice.[5] They were to be on guard against any manifestation of religious dissent and were to see that all religious ordinances of the council were observed. Apparently the council took seriously Zwingli's charges that the Anabaptists were essentially seditionists. Johannes Kessler reported that in order not to appear tyrannical or coercive in matters of faith, the council did not forbid Anabaptist ministers to preach, but demanded that they preach only in St. Laurentius Church at certain stated hours.[1] There the Anabaptists would be permitted to preach only Zwinglian doctrine.

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[1] Egli, Die St. Galler Täufer, p. 36.

[2] Sabbata, p. 149.

[3] Egli, Die St. Galler Täufer, Document No. 6, p. 56.

[4] Ibid., Document Nos. 7, 8, p. 56.

[5] Ibid., p. 42.

The prominent Anabaptist figures were soon arrested and banished. Among these were Hans Krüsi, Laurenz Hochrütiner, Martin Bomgartner, Wolfgang Ulimann, Beda Miles, and others.[2] Krüsi, when banished, was ordered to remain silent about his treatment while in prison. Ulimann returned again and again to St. Gall and each time was arrested and exiled. He was saved from more severe punishment through the intercession of his father and other influential friends. After a long imprisonment Ulimann was exiled on January 22, 1526, and never seems to have returned to the city. He narrowly escaped being executed at Chur in Graubünden in March 1526.[3] On November 19, 1526, the council ordered that Martin Bomgartner's tongue be cut out.[4] Another was required to put up a bond of two hundred guilden as a pledge of his good conduct. A woman was required to do penance by carrying a humiliating sign through the city. Banishment was the usual punishment for foreigners. Vadian, stated that the council found the problem of curbing Anabaptism indescribably difficult and trying.[5]

The council's coercive measures inaugurated in June 1525 convinced the majority of the Anabaptists that it would be expedient to abandon their separatist position. Few were prepared to endure persecution. In a spirit of derision Vadian thus described the plight of the Anabaptists:

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[1] Horsch, "The Swiss Brethren in St. Gall and Appenzell," op. cit., p. 219.

[2] Egli, Die St. Galler Täufer, p. 42.

[3] Vadianische Briefsammlung der Stadtbibliothek St. Gallen, op. cit., IV, 12.

[4] Egli, Die St. Galler Täufer, p. 43.

[5] Horsch, "The Swiss Brethren in St. Gall and Appenzell," op. cit., p. 221; von Watt, op. cit., Vol. I, Part 2, p. 405.

> The swearing in of the two hundred men so frightened these holy people that their zeal abated and, in obedience to the orders of the council, they ceased to assemble in meetings, their congregation ceased to exist, and complete tranquillity again reigned in the city. For, from this time forward, and when the council began to exact fines for disobedience, they yielded fully to the orders of the council and indeed became so pliant that they could have been wound around a finger.[1]

The government was tolerant toward those ex-Anabaptists who conformed to the established order.[2] To prevent Anabaptism "from ever again invading the place overnight" the council ordered in 1527 that careful records of baptisms should be kept in the established churches.[3] Many of those who were compelled to renounce their Anabaptism became religiously indifferent and morally irresponsible. One who was said to have been earlier an Anabaptist, Thomas Schugger, on Ash Wednesday 1526, killed his brother after an all-night drinking festival. Vadian attributed the murder to Schugger's drunkenness or mental derangement.[4] Zwingli seized upon this event and in his Elenchus charged that the Anabaptists were a "murderous sect."[5] The enemies of the Anabaptists published widely this story of fratricide, adding without fail the slanderous accusation that Anabaptism led to murder.[6]

During these early years the Anabaptists of Zurich and St. Gall were in close collaboration with a rapidly growing, vigorous Anabaptist movement in the region now comprising the Canton of Graubünden (Grisons or Raetia), an area east of Glarus and southeast of St. Gall. A group of independent communities of this region were then organized into three leagues: the Grey League in the West, the League of the House of God in the West and South, and the League of the Ten Jurisdictions in the East.[1] The German-speaking region around Chur (League of the House of God) and Maienfeld (League of the Ten Jurisdictions) which bordered on Glarus and St. Gall, was the scene of much Anabaptist activity.[2] A sixteenth-century chronicler, Ulrich Campell, records that the Anabaptists spread rapidly into the region but met immediate persecution in several areas.[3] He adds that in other places the officials were more lax and the movement grew.

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[1] Ibid.; for an English trans. see John Horsch, "An Inquiry into the Truth of Accusations of Fanaticism and Crime against the Early Swiss Brethren," MQR, VIII (January, 1934), 23.

[2] Sabbata, p. 159.

[3] Ibid., p. 248.

[4] Von Watt, op. cit., II, 407-8.

[5] Selected Works of Huldreich Zwingli, p. 171; cf. supra, p. 93.

[6] Horsch reviews the literature on this subject in his article, "An Inquiry into the Truth of Accusations of Fanaticism and Crime . . . ," op. cit., pp. 26-31.

Andreas Castelberger and Georg Blaurock were natives of Graubünden. These two returned from Zurich in April 1525 to propagate the new Anabaptist faith.[4] Soon they were engaged in disputations with the Reformer of Chur, Comander, who wrote Zwingli in August 1525 complaining that in their Anabaptist propaganda they were "giving strength to the Roman Catholics."[5] The Council of Chur wrote to the Council of Zurich reporting that Felix Manz, who had also arrived from Zurich, had created an uproar with his preaching.[6] He had been imprisoned and then sent back to Zurich. Blaurock, also imprisoned, successfully escaped from his captors.[7] Manz returned to Graubünden again in 1526, this time together with Conrad Grebel, who soon thereafter died of the pest in

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[1] Henry A. de Wind, "Relations between Italian Reformers and Anabaptists in the Mid-Sixteenth Century" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Dept. of History, University of Chicago, 1951), p. 36.

[2] J. ten Doornkaat-Koolman, "Graubünden," ML, II, 157-59.

[3] Ulrich Campell, Historia Raetica, ed. P. Plattner, Vol. IX of Quellen zur Schweizer Geschichte (Basel, 1890), p. 85, cited by de Wind, op. cit., p. 42.

[4] Supra, pp. 69, 71.

[5] Comander to Zwingli, Chur, August 25, 1525, cited by P. D. Rosius de Porta, Historia Reformationis ecclesiarum Raeticarum (Curiae Raetorum [Chur], 1771), I, Part I, 87, cited by de Wind, op. cit., p. 43.

[6] Q. Zurich, No. 86.

[7] Doornkaat-Koolman, op. cit., p. 157.

Maienfeld.[1] Wolfgang Ulimann of St. Gall, as has been noted, was also active in Graubünden in early 1526.

The Roman Catholic and Reformed faiths were granted parity of status in Graubünden in a decree of the Diet of Davos in May 1526.[2] All sectarians, however, were threatened with punishment of life and limb.[3] In this same period a special tribunal was established at Maienfeld near the border of St. Gall.[4] Eighteen judges were appointed together with sixty attendants who were instructed to implement the decisions of the court. Inasmuch as the majority of the accused recanted their Anabaptist views, the punishments consisted mostly of fines. There is evidence that torture was employed to evoke recantations.[5] With the application of these stringent measures, the Anabaptist movement began to recede after 1526 and evidenced itself in only isolated instances. Chur was invited by the Council of Zurich in August 1527 to send representatives to Zurich to consider the adoption of common measures for the suppression of the Anabaptists.[6] Chur declined the invitation because, it was explained, the region was no longer troubled with the problem.

The Anabaptist movement manifested itself in St. Gall only sporadically after 1526. St. Gall followed the lead of Zurich and signed the harsh Concordat of 1527 against the Anabaptists. In 1530 the council called a public disputation on the question of the ban and church discipline. Although Anabaptists were invited to participate, none appeared.[7] Officers of the law were ordered at that time to be alert to apprehend all Anabaptists and to punish them severely. Vadian recorded in his Diarium that after the second Kappel War of 1531 the Anabaptists grew in strength in various localities throughout Switzerland and that the St. Gall council was compelled to take action.[1] In 1532 large numbers attended the preaching of Hans Marquardt, a former priest of Constance.[2] Among his converts was Master Conrad, the executioner of St. Gall. When a certain murderer was to be executed, Conrad submitted his resignation with the explanation that never again would he take human life. Since he had not been baptized, this presented a perplexing problem to the council. A strong minority favored tolerant treatment of Conrad and the Anabaptists, but the majority sided with the burgomaster in favor of severe punishment.[3] Marquardt was seized, but before making final decision in his case a public debate was arranged between Marquardt and Vadian, which took place from June 19 to 21, 1532.[4] A few days after the debate Marquardt was banished from the city. Apparently that was the last major manifestation of the Anabaptist movement in the city and territory of St. Gall.

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[1] Supra, p. 84.

[2] Doornkaat-Koolman, op. cit., p. 157.

[3] Cornelius Bergmann, "Chur," ML, I, 354.

[4] De Wind, op. cit., p. 45.

[5] Doornkaat-Koolman, op. cit., p. 157.

[6] Bergmann, "Chur," op. cit., p. 354.

[7] Die Eidgenössischen Abschiede aus dem Zeitraume von 1529 bis 1532, No. 444, p. 870.

On the final day of the public debate Hans Marquardt declared his views on the Christian's relationship to the state. He emphasized unmistakably that the Anabaptists recognized the function and authority of the magistracy:

> We confess that all civil government is necessary and is a divine appointment and that the use of the sword by the government is good and necessary, and we say with Paul that every man should be subject and obedient to the higher power, not only to a mild and peaceful but also to a tyrannical government, for the reason that there is no power but of God. Therefore all believers, under whatever government they may live, will not complain of heavy burdens, nor will they resist the government or cause trouble or discontent on account of what they may be called upon to bear. In matters of their faith, however, the believers are responsible to God alone to whom they owe greater obedience than to man. . . . In matters which do not concern faith and conscience and do not conflict with our duty to God, we are ready to obey the civil government in anything that may be asked of us. And if the government, contrary to justice and right, confiscates our property and reduces us to poverty, we bear and suffer it,

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[1] Von Watt, op. cit., III, 455-56.

[2] Ibid., III, 456.

[3] Ibid.

[4] For Vadian's account of the debate see ibid., III, 455-502; cf. Egli, Die St. Galler Täufer, pp. 53-54.

> since it is impossible for us to escape such oppression without transgression and disturbance. But that the Christian should be an executive of the government, or a magistrate, we do not admit. Christ says, "the kings of the gentiles exercise lordship over them. . . . But among you it shall not be so, but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth serve." Here the believers are forbidden the execution of the coercive powers of government. And the fact that under the Old Covenant God has permitted His people the use of the sword does not concern or bind us, for the old law has been replaced by the new commandment of Christ that we should love our enemies. . . . The believer is not to be an earthly ruler, or use violence, or go to war, or use the sword.[1]

Marquardt appeared in this statement to be more eager than most Anabaptists to to stress the obedience of the Christian to the magistracy. He was inclined to speak of the powers of government while others tended to emphasize the limitations of government. Where many Anabaptists expressed disapproval that the magistracy should use capital punishment, Marquardt might appear to condone such punishment when he spoke of the sword of the government as "good and necessary." It seems probable, however, that Marquardt was in essential agreement with other Anabaptists and that the shading of emphasis in his statements is to be explained by reference to the perils of his immediate situation.

The Canton of Appenzell, which was separated from St. Gall by a slender strip of territory of the prince-abbot, was bound by close economic and cultural ties to St. Gall. This rural canton raised flax for the linen industry of St. Gall.[2] Vadian was second only to Zwingli as the spiritual leader of the Reformation in Appenzell. The new faith took early root in Appenzell where the term "the Reformed Church" (reformatae ecclesiae) was first used.[3] This canton responded to the challenge of the Reformation in a unique way on August 6, 1524, when it was decided to permit each parish to choose the faith to which it would adhere.[1] The minority group in each community was granted the freedom to attend services of its choice in another community. Seven communities declared for the Reformation, while two remained Catholic.

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[1] Von Watt, op. cit., III, 501-502; English translation of passage in John Horsch, The Principle of Nonresistance as Held by the Mennonite Church (2nd ed.; Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1939), pp. 22-23.

[2] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 242.

[3] Egli, Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte, p. 131.

The Anabaptist movement enjoyed great freedom to expand in Appenzell where the religious problem was handled in this democratic and decentralized manner. The Anabaptists Eberli Bolt and Johannes Krüsi achieved remarkable success in their evangelistic efforts in the spring of 1525.[2] Large Anabaptist congregations were established in the evangelical communities of Teufen, Herisau, and Gossau. Refugees arrived from other cantons, especially Zurich, to swell the numbers of Anabaptists.[3] A clergymen, viewing this rapid growth of the Anabaptists, communicated to Zwingli that immorality and fanaticism were rampant among the Anabaptists in Appenzell.[4] In December or early January 1526 Zwingli repeated these charges in a sermon preached in Zurich. He also wrote to Vadian, asking him to investigate these reports because some in Zurich refused to believe the accusations.[5] Zwingli soon heard that his charges had deeply offended the Council of Appenzell. He hastened to write a letter of apology, explaining that in his sermon he had intended no criticism of the authorities of Appenzell.[6] Apparently the only action taken by the government at that time was to forbid Anabaptist meetings without designating any punishments.[7]

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[1] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 387.

[2] Johannes Willi, Die Reformation im Lande Appenzell (Bern: Ernst Bircher, 1923), pp. 78-79.

[3] Cf. Q. Zurich, No. 154, pp. 157-58.

[4] Willi, op. cit., p. 81.

[5] Zwingli to Vadian, Zurich, January 17, 1526, ZW, VIII, 505-6; Zwingli also discussed these charges in a letter to Capito, January 1, 1526, ZW, Vol. VIII, No. 434.

[6] Zwingli to Appenzell, Zurich, February 12, 1526, ZW, Vol. VIII, No. 450.

[7] Sabbata, p. 157.

In this relatively tolerant setting the movement continued unabated until 1529. George Blaurock was teaching and baptizing in the canton in April 1529.[1] A few months later Blaurock was burned at the stake in the Tyrol. Under pressure from Zurich to check the Anabaptists, the council arranged for a public disputation which was held in a church at Teufen on October 10, 1529.[2] Among the six propositions defended by the Anabaptists were the following related to the magistracy: (1) that one must obey the magistracy only in so far as its commands are not contrary to the will of God; (2) that a Christian is forbidden to execute an evildoer, to collect taxes, and administer justice; (3) that a Christian may not swear an oath.[3] Zwingli was especially dissatisfied with the laxity of the government in suppressing the Anabaptists.[4] On January 10, 1530, and June 1, 1531, the evangelical cantons, apparently under the influence of Zwingli, sent a note to Appenzell, warning her to deal with her Anabaptists more severely.[5] No information is available as to what action the council took against the Anabaptists. After 1530 the movement declined in Appenzell and large numbers migrated eastward to Moravia. One such party of emigrants, led by Wolfgang Ulimann, was seized and executed at Waldsee in South Germany in 1530.[6]

The Anabaptists of St. Gall and Appenzell shared fundamentally the same view concerning the civil authorities as their brethren in Zurich. In the history of the movement in this area the most notable expression of Anabaptist thought concerning the state was Conrad Grebel's letter to Vadian pleading for religious toleration and the avoidance of persecution. This letter merits inclusion among the significant documents in the record of the struggle for religious freedom. The statement of Marquardt, with its firm recognition of the authority of government, contributes also to an understanding of the positive attitude of the Anabaptists toward civil authority. The Anabaptists in St. Gall and Appenzell had opportunity to develop in a unique way. The story of the movement here reveals that under vigorous leadership and in a setting of toleration the Anabaptists were capable of attracting a mass urban following. Systematic persecution, however, quickly thinned the ranks of the brotherhood--especially in St. Gall. Only a small minority had the valor--or if one prefers, the obstinacy--to remain steadfast in the face of persecution. It seems surprising that such a popular movement should have disintegrated so quickly in St. Gall. Several explanations may be suggested. (1) Zwingli, a vigorous and compelling personality, interjected himself into the struggle at the crucial moments. He received able support in the influential leadership of Vadian. (2) St. Gall was an urban community lacking a large rural hinterland. In the sixteenth century it was easier for authorities to eradicate dissent from a town than from fields, forests, and highlands. The Anabaptists did not have the advantage of a broad rural base in the territory of St. Gall. (3) The St. Gall council not only legislated against the Anabaptists, but it backed up the legislation with a strong show of force--the swearing in of a force of two hundred special deputies. With an iron hand the government moved swiftly to drive all leaders of the Anabaptists out of the town. With another hand the government offered complete amnesty to all followers of the movement. St. Gall thus was able to curb the Anabaptist movement more quickly and decisively than most towns and regions found it possible to do.

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[1] _Q. Zurich_, No. 286, p. 301.

[2] Willi, _op. cit._, p. 84.

[3] _Ibid._

[4] _Ibid._, p. 85.

[5] _Die Eidgenössischen Abschiede aus dem Zeitraume von 1529 bis 1532_, pp. 505, 1017.

[6] Willi, _op. cit._, p. 85.

# CHAPTER VII

# BERN

The Anabaptist movement never could be totally extinguished in the territory of Bern. At first sight it seems strange that the highly efficient and centralized government of Bern should fail to eliminate this nonconformist element from the body politic. The story of the Anabaptists in the territory of Bern illustrates the difficulties which encumber even a strong government bent on destroying a spiritual movement which enjoys popular support among the rural population.

Ever since the day in 1191 when Bern was founded as a military outpost on the River Aar, the city had been conscious of a unique political destiny. Bern proudly became a free town of the Empire in 1218.[1] Late in the thirteenth century Bern revised its municipal government to include a mayor (Schultheiss), an Inner Council of twelve, a Board of Control of sixteen which in turn elected the Great Council of two hundred.[2] Unlike Basel and Zurich, Bern never was a guild-governed town. From the outset Bern had been ruled by the patrician caste, die Junker. The town, whose prowess had been confirmed on fields of battle, had long enjoyed a profound sense of community. The chroniclers hymned the praises of their valiant city.[3] The men of the ruling class were called to serve in a variety of public capacities--on the councils, as Landvögte in rural districts, as envoys on foreign missions. This wealth of political experience gave to Bern a strong continuity of political purpose.

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[1] Oechsli, Quellenbuch zur Schweizergeshichte, pp. 27-30.

[2] W. D. McCrackan, The Rise of the Swiss Republic (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1901), p. 155.

[3] M. D. Hottinger, The Stories of Basel, Berne, and Zurich (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1933), pp. 149-50.

As the feudal order disintegrated, this disciplined aristocratic republic extended its sway over the towns and communities of the fertile Aar valley. The city acquired in the south the fortress of Thun, the key to the highlands, and in the north most of the Aargau. The victorious Burgundian war (1474-77) directed the eyes of Bern and the Confederates westward. Fribourg and Solothurn, because of geopolitical interests, attached themselves to powerful Bern. After the decisive defeat at Pavia in 1525, Bern pressed with new zeal its anti-Savoyard policy toward the southwest. With her talents in the arts of war and statesmanship she became master of the west of Switzerland.[1]

Bern was never a major commercial power as Strassburg or even Basel and Zurich. One of the secrets of Bern's economic health was the mutual interdependence achieved between her town economy and her country economy.[2] Good highways spanned the canton. The rural economy of the domain was closely supervised by Bern through her appointed officers (Landvögte) in the local districts. The Landvogt, usually of patrician birth, was the political administrator, judge, tax collector, and military commander of his district. After the Reformation he was also the chairman of the district ecclesiastical council. The Bernese government worked methodically for the abolition of serfdom in her lands. By 1485 Bern was able to declare that hereditary servitude would no longer be tolerated within her borders.[3] The Bernese farmers and the dwellers in remote rural villages, however, were not fully convinced of the merits of this governmental centralization. They cherished their local liberties.

Bern approached the Reformation with conservative deliberateness and hesitation. Its first step in the direction of the Reformation was to release in 1523 a mandate regulating preaching.[1] The fundamental norm for all preaching was to be the Bible. Not until 1528, however, was a disputation held to lay before the citizenry the question of whether the city was to go the way of the Reformation. Being the most powerful member of the Confederation, Bern dreaded the disintegration which would come with religious disunion. One wanted the reform of the church, but a tranquil, orderly reform. The Bernese Reformation thus conformed to the spirit of its mild-mannered, cautious Reformer, Berchtold Haller. Religion had long been wedded to the state. The council sought with innumerable mandates to regulate and improve the moral life of the clergy and laity.[2] It was therefore entirely natural that the Reformation Church should be a state established Volkskirche, because it was universally assumed that the government had a responsibility for the ordering of the common spiritual life of the people. The leaders of the Reformation in Bern were men of local significance who worked steadily and unobtrusively for the victory of the Reformed cause. In addition to Haller, their number included the physician and chronicler, Valerius Anshelm; the councilman, Lienhard Tremp; the poet and painter, Niklaus Manuel; and the preachers Sebastian Meyer, Franz Kolb, and Caspar Grossmann (Megander).

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[1] Leonard von Muralt, "Berns Westpolitik von 1525-1531," Zwingliana, IV (1928), 470-76.

[2] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 244.

[3] Oechsli, History of Switzerland, p. 3.

As the Reformation party waxed stronger, the concern of the Bernese government was that there should be no decision on the Reformation until there was unanimity of conviction in the city. The Reformation issue was interlocked with a fundamental inner political conflict--the conflict between the city commercial classes, who held a majority in the Great Council, and the landed patricians, who were entrenched in the Small or Inner Council. The men of the Inner Council, by this time a body of twenty-seven, followed a policy dictated

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[1] Aktensammlung zur Geschichte der Berner-Reformation, 1521-1532, edited by R. Steck and G. Tobler, (Bern: K. J. Wyss Erben, 1923), No. 249, pp. 65-68 (hereafter cited as Akt. Bern).

[2] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 333.

by their involvement in the foreign mercenary system and their ancient loyalty to the Catholic Forest Cantons. The commercial classes, who were powerfully moved by the new gospel being preached in the guild halls, clamored for a reform of the church, a democratization of the Inner Council, and a more aggressive foreign policy toward the southwest. Assessing accurately the new political and religious forces, the patrician classes conceded gradually but reluctantly to this ground swell of opinion. In 1527 the commercial and artisan classes were granted seats on the Inner Council. With broader segments of the citizenry represented in the center of power, the city was ready to press forward with a Reformation.[1] The Schultheiss and the Inner and Greater Councils called for a new disputation, this one to be held in Bern in January 1528.[2] Zwingli mobilized for the Bern Disputation the whole evangelical force of Switzerland and southern Germany. The immediate result of this three weeks' disputation was that Bern was won to Protestantism.

The actualization of the Reformation began immediately in Bern. On February 2, 1528, in a great assemblage in the Minster the citizenry swore to recognize and defend all decisions and mandates regarding the church which would be promulgated by the city government.[3] Thus, the ruling class of Bern had gained mastery of a popular movement. On February 7 the town council issued the Reformation decree to all towns and communes.[4] The government pressed the Reform carefully and systematically throughout the country districts, avoiding the employment of naked force. However, when the people of the Oberland, influenced by their proximity to the Catholic Forest Cantons, clung faithfully to the ancient church, the region was simply occupied by force and the Reformation established.[1]

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[1] Von Muralt, "Stadtgemeinde und Reformation in der Schweiz," op. cit., pp. 369-73.

[2] Akt. Bern, No. 1391, pp. 518-21. [3] Akt. Bern, No. 1504, p. 625.

[4] A copy of the Reformation mandate is to be found in Akt. Bern, No. 1513, and Theodor de Quervain, Kirchliche und soziale Züstande in Bern unmittelbar nach der Einfuhrung der Reformation, 1528-1536 (Bern: Gustav Grunau, 1906), p. 185.

With its customary administrative aptitude, Bern promptly organized the church into districts (Kapitel), established standards of ecclesiastical conduct, and called for periodic synods and church visitations.[2] The council established on May 29, 1528, an ecclesiastical court which was delegated final responsibility for all church matters except those of the most serious import.[3] This Chorgericht, as it was called, consisted of six members, two each from the Inner Council, the Great Council, and the clergy. Powers of punishment were placed at the disposition of the Chorgericht.

The full pattern of the Reformed Church became manifest in the constitution prepared at the Bern Synod of 1532.[4] A fundamental premise in this new church order was the acknowledgment that God had established two orders of power, the spiritual and the temporal. Inasmuch as an external church order was required and it was thought that this could not be established outside the context of power, the Bern Synod concluded that the visible church must stand under the leadership of the state. The magistracy was to implement the free preaching of the Word and the observance of the sacraments. The state was to supervise in detail the public morals and punish sin and error. This formulation of 1532 affirmed in principle the freedom of the church from state interference, but in practice the state was master. The magistracy promulgated church laws and creeds. Citizenship entailed acceptance of these mandates. Law required attendance at preaching services and communion. The selection of the pastors was in the hands of the city council. The preacher thus often came to be identified in the public mind with the long arm of the state. Although those in authority energetically sought to procure a more qualified country clergy, the rural people often had little respect for the village preachers.[1] This situation contributed undoubtedly to the amazing responsiveness of the country folk to the Anabaptist preachers.

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[1] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 279-80.

[2] De Quervain, op. cit., pp. 4-17.

[3] Akt. Bern, p. 25.

[4] Otto E. Strasser, Capitos Beziehungen zu Bern, Vol. VII of Quellen und Abhandlungen zur Schweizerischen Reformationsgeschichte (Leipzig: M. Heinsius Nachfolger, 1928), pp. 90-117.

## The Introduction of the Anabaptist Movement

Late in the year 1524 or early in 1525 Heinrich Bullinger wrote to Heinrich Simler at Bern to warn the latter that Anabaptist teaching had traveled to Bern.[2] Berchtold Haller wrote to his friend Zwingli on November 29, 1525, that Anabaptism was spreading in the city of Bern and that the Councilman Lienhard Tremp, Zwingli's brother-in-law, was in danger of falling victim to the teaching.[3] Two theories have been advanced to explain from whence these Anabaptist ideas came.[4] One theory affirms that the movement was of indigenous origin--probably Waldensian. The other theory, which seems to be preferred by non-Bernese historians, is that the movement was transmitted from Zurich to Bern.

The council of Bern handled the Anabaptist issue for the first time on January 13, 1526.[5] A woman from Zofingen and her children were summoned before the council because they had been rebaptized. Upon renunciation of her rebaptism, she was released from a sentence of exile. On the twenty-sixth of the same month Hans Pfistermeyer from Aarau was ordered into exile because of his Anabaptist convictions.[6] Two months later Agnes Zender was banished for similar beliefs.[7] The city clerk of Aarau wrote to Bern early in 1526 reporting that a good man had come from Waldshut and found work with one Hans Kallenberg.[8]

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[1] De Quervain, _op. cit._, pp. 46-56.

[2] Müller, _op. cit._, p. 23.

[3] Haller to Zwingli, Bern, November 29, 1525, _ZW_, VIII, 441-42.

[4] For a critical evaluation of these theories see Gratz, _op. cit._, pp. 148-53.

[5] _Akt. Bern_, p. 255.

[6] _Akt. Bern_, pp. 257-58.

[7] _Akt. Bern_, p. 298.

[8] _Akt. Bern_, p. 264.

The devout neighbors came and had fellowship with him. Undoubtedly this man from Waldshut was Jacob Gross, a lay evangelist, who was imprisoned at Brugg in March and threatened with drowning.[1] The instructions dispatched by the Bernese council to local officials concerning the Anabaptist problem spoke of "secret meetings," "hedge preaching," "tavern preaching." Landvögte were ordered to expel these people from the land.[2]

The year 1527 brought a considerable increase in the number of Anabaptists. In April eight Anabaptists from Basel came to Bern, among these Hans Seckler, a wallet-maker, and Jacob Hochrütiner, a citizen of St. Gall.[3] Haller estimated on April 25, 1527, that there were approximately twenty Anabaptists in the city of Bern.[4] Haller was deeply troubled over this upsurge of Anabaptism and wrote to his mentor Zwingli begging him: "Help us, dearest Ulrich, to frustrate the designs of these people."[5] In the former lodgings of the Anabaptists was found a copy of the Schleitheim Confession which was immediately dispatched to Zwingli with the entreaty that he refute these difficult arguments. Meanwhile Seckler and Hochrütiner were brought to trial. The council proposed banishment, but the clergy begged for permission to counsel with the two. The Anabaptists would not recant. Thereupon Seckler and Hochrütiner were placed in neck irons and led out of the land.[6] Hochrütiner returned again six months later to the region of Bern where he could expect to be sentenced to be drowned. The council, however, pardoned him but both he and his wife were banished with the warning that if he returned again he would be executed "without mercy."[7]

Berchtold Haller was burdened in this period with an uneasy conscience concerning the Anabaptists. He informed Zwingli that he had publicly stated his disapproval of capital punishment.[1] Haller was intimately acquainted with the Anabaptists. He reported having a public debate with them on May 21, 1527--the first recorded disputation with Anabaptists in Bern.[2] Haller claimed that at the conclusion of the debate they were convinced of their errors and recanted, but this is unlikely because many of the participants were soon on the road again spreading their faith.

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[1] Akt. Bern, p. 298.

[2] Amstutz-Tschirren, "Emmental," ML, I, 578.

[3] Akt. Bern, p. 395.

[4] Haller to Zwingli, Bern, April 25, 1527, ZW, IX, 104.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Akt. Bern, p. 395.

[7] Akt. Bern, p. 509.

## An Era of Persecution

Bern was convinced of the Anabaptist danger. On August 14, 1527, she responded to Zurich's urgent appeal and issued with Zurich and St. Gall the harsh concordat against the Anabaptists. Three weeks later Bern assured the more aggressive Zurich that she was now energetically implementing the terms of the agreement.[3] Copies of the mandate were sent to all officials throughout the city and countryside. The officials were charged to be on guard for this "separatist and rebellious sect sometimes known as Anabaptists" and to "root out this weed."[4] Thereafter this mandate was normative for the punishment of Anabaptists in Bern. Persecution was increasingly systematic and severe. All this had occurred before the city had officially declared itself for the Reformation.

The council dispatched orders during the great Bern Disputation to seize all Anabaptists, and to bring them to Bern.[5] On one day, January 22, 1528, a recess in the disputation was called and a public debate arranged with the Anabaptists.[6] Among the eight Anabaptists were Hans Seckler from Basel,

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[1] Horsch, Mennonites in Europe, p. 95.

[2] Gratz, op. cit., p. 160.

[3] Akt. Bern, p. 478.

[4] For a copy of the letter of instructions see Müller, op. cit., p. 27.

[5] Akt. Bern, pp. 585, 587.

[6] Leonard von Muralt, "Das Gespräch mit den Wiedertäufern am 22. Januar 1528 zu Bern," Zwingliana, V, No. 9 (1933), 409-13.

Georg Blaurock originally from Chur, Hans Pfistermeyer and Heini Seiler from Aarau.[1] The protocol of this debate is not to be found in the city records, only a brief notice in the manual of the council that Zwingli had convinced them of their errors, but nonetheless they would not abandon their position.[2] The discussion indicated that a council member, Vincent Spaeting, was inclined sympathetically toward the Anabaptists. Following the colloquy the combined councils condemned this slippery false teaching (*glyssenden falschen lere*) which had caused so much disturbance and ordered the Anabaptists into exile with the warning that they would be promptly drowned if they returned.[3]

The city council dispatched an order, probably on March 26, 1528, to all deans of ecclesiastical districts in the canton urging them to warn all pastors of the "seditious sect of Anabaptists," who with their "sly, attractive manner and smooth words" seduce the common people.[4] Nine characteristics of their life and teaching were listed: (1) that all property should be in common; (2) that no Christian was permitted to swear an oath; (3) that one was neither permitted to give nor to receive interest and tithes; (4) that no beneficed clergyman could preach the truth; (5) that infant baptism was an abomination; (6) that they were all forbidden to hear the established pastors; (7) that they had special practices in eating, drinking, praying and greeting one another; (8) that no magistrate was permitted to punish by death a murderer or an evil doer; (9) that all who were not of their sect were called unbelievers and heathen. In conclusion all pastors were to watch vigilantly for Anabaptists and to inform the local officials immediately should any be found.

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[1] *Akt. Bern*, pp. 606-607.

[2] Richard Feller, "Die Anfänge des Täufertums in Bern," *Festgabe für Heinrich Türler*, Vol. XXI, No. 1 of *Archiv des Historischen Vereins des Kantons Bern* (1931), p. 113.

[3] *Akt. Bern*, pp. 606-607.

[4] A copy of the communication is to be found in William J. McGlothlin, *Die Berner Täufer bis 1532* (Berlin: E. Ebering, 1902), pp. 35-36.

All this was for the purpose of avoiding the "great grief, disturbance, and damage of subornation."

The prison was filled with Anabaptists during the early summer of 1529. Among the prisoners were Hans Seckler, Hans Dreier, and Heini Seiler. On May 24, 1529, a committee of clergymen and city councilmen cross-examined the prisoners.[1] At the end of the extended discussion the accused still declined to disavow their faith. Thereupon sometime between July 8 and 15, 1529, three of the brethren--Hans Seckler, Hans Dreier, and Heini Seiler--were drowned in the River Aar.[2] They were the first Anabaptists known to have been executed in Bern. Soon thereafter the other Anabaptist prisoners were banished and threatened with death should they return.[3] An Anabaptist minister, Konrad Eichacher from the region of Lake Thun, was subjected to a long trial in early 1530 and executed on February 21, 1530.[4]

This harsh, systematic persecution eradicated the Anabaptist movement from the city of Bern. After 1529 the movement found its most enthusiastic response among the people of the countryside. The Bernese council was cognizant that the Anabaptists were active throughout the breadth of the land. Scarcely a month passed without the government dispatching letters of inquiry, instructions, and orders to the local authorities on the handling of Anabaptists.[5] Not all the leading citizens of Bern favored this ruthless persecution. One, the Chronicler Valerius Anshelm, viewed this whole proceeding with disapproval.[6]

Early in January 1530 information was received from Basel authorities that Anabaptists were coming into the regions of Bern and Solothurn to propagate their faith. Fourteen *Landvögte* along the western and northern borders of the canton were immediately alerted to halt all strangers, to question them, and if they appeared to be Anabaptists (which it was explained was easy to note from their manner), to imprison them and report this to Bern.[1] On February 1 four Anabaptists were seized at Bipp, but because the four were residents of Basel and Basel was not yet a party to the Concordat of August 14, 1527, Bern had no legal right to punish them.[2] After a long trial, they were ordered out of the land and threatened with death should they return.

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[1] Akt. Bern, pp. 1040-43.

[2] Akt. Bern, p. 1097; Valerius Anshelm, Die Berner Chronik des Valerius Anshelm (Bern: K. J. Wyss, 1896), V, 238.

[3] Akt. Bern, p. 1099. [4] De Quervain, op. cit., p. 123.

[5] For extracts of these communications from the council see Müller, op. cit., pp. 30-32.

[6] Anshelm, op. cit., V, 39, 74-76, 283.

Bern was highly displeased with the neighboring Canton of Solothurn which seemed so indifferent to the Anabaptist menace. Anabaptists came south from Basel and other areas and settled in the region of Solothurn along the Bernese border but just out of reach of the police of Bern.[3] The Anabaptist evangelists were so active in this canton that Berchtold Haller lamented to Bullinger in September 1532: "The Anabaptists are gaining the upperhand."[4] A few months later Haller again wrote: "There are only a very few [Solothurners] who have not learned their gospel from these people."[5] Bern reprimanded Solothurn repeatedly for her negligence in controlling the Anabaptists, especially in the border area around Erlinsbach, where they were concentrated. On March 17, 1531, the Bernese council demanded of Solothurn that either she should punish her Anabaptists or Bern would seize and punish any Solothurn Anabaptists who strayed across into Bern territory.[6] Bern was never satisfied with Solothurn's management of the Anabaptist problem, especially as more and more Anabaptists fled from the valley of the Emme and found refuge in the canton of Solothurn or traversed the canton en route to the Jura mountains in the Bishopric of Basel.[1]

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[1] *Akt. Bern*, p. 1212.

[2] *Akt. Bern*, pp. 1226, 1232.

[3] *Akt. Bern*, p. 1256.

[4] Haller to Bullinger, Bern, September 12, 1532, quoted in Ottius, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

[5] De Quervain, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

[6] *Die Eidgenössischen Abschiede aus dem Zeitraum von 1529 bis 1532*, p. 901; cf. Gotthold Appenzeller, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Solothurner Täufertums," *Jahrbuch für Solothurnische Geschichte*, XIV (1941), 60.

Bern faced a similar problem in the northwest in the Freie Aemter, districts under the joint administration of the seven oldest cantons (excluding Bern). Anabaptists moved freely back and forth through this region. Anabaptist meetings were held in the border communities so that if they were surprised by the authorities, the brethren could scatter across the borders beyond the jurisdiction of the police.[2] The leader of the Anabaptists in this region was Hans Pfistermeyer from Aarau, whose capture and arrest was ordered by the authorities. Bern pressed for uniform methods of punishment for the Anabaptists in the Freie Aemter.[3] The problem of Anabaptism in this district, together with the urgent concern to apprehend Pfistermeyer, was considered at a series of meetings of the Confederation in the autumn of 1530.[4] As a result uniform procedures of penal control were agreed upon. Some of the pastors in the northern districts were aggressive in combatting the Anabaptists, particularly Heinrich Möriker of Schinznach, who introduced in his parish in 1528 a baptismal register as a technique of controlling the Anabaptists.[5] Gradually other pastors followed this example.[6]

The leader of Bernese Anabaptism by 1530 was Hans Pfistermeyer. Bern was delighted to be informed of the arrest of Pfistermeyer on March 24, 1531.[7]

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[1] Gotthold Appenzeller, "Solothurner Täufertum im 16 Jahrhundert," Festschrift für Eugen Tatanioff (Solothurn, 1938), p. 115.

[2] J. Heiz, "Täufer im Aargau," Taschenbuch der historischen Gesellschaft des Kantons Aargau für das Jahr 1902 (Aarau: H. R. Sauerländer and Co., 1902), p. 136.

[3] Akt. Bern, pp. 1288, 1289.

[4] Die Eidgenössischen Abschiede aus dem Zeitraum 1529 bis 1532, Nos. 387, 395, 406, 410, 433.

[5] Heiz, op. cit., p. 131. [6] Ibid., p. 139. [7] Müller, op. cit., p. 46.

According to the dictates of the Concordat of 1527 he should have been drowned immediately. The government and clergy arranged instead for a disputation with the purpose in mind of publicly refuting the views of this arch-dissenter. Arrayed against Pfistermeyer were five state church ministers: Berchtold Haller, Kaspar Megander, Franz Kolb, Sebastian Hofmeister, and Jacob Otherus. At the conclusion of the proceedings Pfistermeyer admitted defeat and recanted his views. The jubilant clergy and government ordered the record of the debate printed and widely distributed.[1] Pfistermeyer was released, but the costs of the proceedings were laid upon him.[2] The authorities cherished hope that the defection of this leading Anabaptist would turn the tide against the movement.

During the early thirties the Bern government kept a constant eye on the Anabaptists. This is evidenced by the frequent letters of instruction and inquiry dispatched to the *Landvögte* and by the many reports from local officials. The following reports are illustrative: an Anabaptist was summoned before the *Chorgericht* of Brugg for possessing the Anabaptist articles (presumably the Schleitheim Confession); seven Anabaptists were imprisoned at Biberstein; five Anabaptists were to pay the costs of their board in prison; two at Huttwyl were released after paying costs and a five pound fine; another had to appear before the council for harboring an Anabaptist from Basel; one from Madiswyl was ordered to reveal the names of his brethren.[3] The heaviest concentration of Anabaptists was to be found by this time in the Emmental, the region east of Bern which bordered on the Aargau and the cantons of Luzern and Solothurn. These many miles of border were of highly strategic value to the Anabaptists when they were pursued by the law. They had only to slip across the border beyond the jurisdiction of their pursuers. The Bern council, meeting on July 22, 1531, concluded that the Anabaptist problem was becoming more acute and that the situation demanded more definitive instructions.[1]

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[1] *Ein Christenlich Gespräch gehallten zuo Bern Zwüschen den Predicanten und Hansen Pfyster Mayer von Arouw/ den Widertouff/ Eyd/ Oberkeyt/ vnd andere Widertoufferische Artickel betreffende* (Bern, 1531) (hereafter cited as "Bern Disputation of 1531").

[2] *Akt. Bern*, p. 1374.

[3] De Quervain, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-27.

These instructions were spelled out explicitly in an "Anabaptist Mandate" published by the Bern council on July 31, 1531.[2] Observing first that the Anabaptists abstained from state church attendance, it was ordered that everyone attend Sunday worship and especially the service on communion Sunday. The following gradations in punishment were outlined for Anabaptists: (1) He who refused to attend the established church had to promise to remain silent or he was to be summoned before the city Chorgericht. (2) He who would not remain silent or appear before the Chorgericht to justify his faith was, upon giving an oath or a pledge not to return, to be banished from the city and the land. (3) He who returned without permission--that is, broke his oath (Eidbruch) or renounced his pledge--was to be immersed under water until he almost drowned (called "ducking") and then banished again. (4) If he returned a second time, he was without mercy to be drowned because of his second Eidbruch. Anabaptists from abroad who preached were to be exiled. Appended to this list of punishments were the instructions that one who was rebaptized or one who gave food or shelter to an Anabaptist from abroad was required without exception to pay a fine of ten shillings. All local officials and ministers were ordered to announce the provisions of this mandate and were under oath to comply with them.

During the ensuing months the government followed up this Mandate of 1531 with a flood of instructions to local officials in all parts of the canton demanding rigorous prosecution of the Anabaptists.[3] Contrary to expectations, the Anabaptists continued to increase. In part this may be attributed to the fact that the humble rural people were psychologically receptive to the anti-war and nonresistant teachings of the Anabaptists after the Protestant suffered such a crushing defeat from the armies of the Catholic cantons in the autumn of 1531. Only success would have justified Zwingli's bold foreign policy with the common people. Both Zurich and Bern were compelled, in the "Kappel Letters," to pledge that no future alliance nor war would be instituted without the consent of the rural population.[1] In order to control the Anabaptist problem more carefully all who were captured were ordered to be sent to the city of Bern for trial.[2] Names of the imprisoned are seldom mentioned in the records.

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[1] Akt. Bern, p. 1376.

[2] For a copy of the mandate in the original German see Akt. Bern, pp. 1380-81; for a copy in modern German see de Quervain, op. cit., pp. 243-44.

[3] Ibid., p. 128.

The city council had been so pleased with the results of the disputation with Pfistermeyer in 1531 that another public debate was planned, but on a greater scale.[3] The town of Zofingen in the district of Aarau was selected for the disputation since it was known that Anabaptists would be disinclined to come to Bern, the scene of the imprisonment and martyrdom of their brethren. The Anabaptists desired a public debate to refute certain allegations concerning their faith. They feared, however, that they might be clapped into prison as was done at the Disputation of 1528 when to their sorrow they discovered that the safe-conduct guarantee did not apply to them. Anabaptist fears were allayed when the city council sent out instructions to all localities inviting Anabaptists to attend and specifically guaranteeing them safe-conduct to and from the Zofingen disputation. Bern urged Solothurn to send Anabaptist leaders ("Rabinos") to Zofingen, especially Martin Weninger (called

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[1] Oechsli, History of Switzerland, pp. 125-26.

[2] De Quervain, op. cit., p. 129.

[3] Ibid.; the proceedings of the disputation were published: Handlung oder Acta der Disputation gehalten zu Zoffingen in Aargaw, von den Predigern zu Bern mit den Widertauffern (Zurich: Christoph Froschauer, 1532), (hereafter cited as "Zofingen Disputation of 1532").

Lincki), leader of the movement in that area.[1] Twenty-three Anabaptists were present, including Christian Brügger, who was released from prison to attend the debate. The state and church were represented by an impressive roster of councilmen, burgomasters, city clerks, Landvögte and clergymen. The government thought this an excellent opportunity to inform local officials and pastors of the Anabaptist peril and to demonstrate how to refute Anabaptist arguments. Hence, the council arranged for wide representation of local officials. All pastors were ordered to attend the debate or pay a fine. The council also invited two former Anabaptists, Rappenstein and Pfistermeyer, to be prize exhibits at the debate. Pfistermeyer made only a few brief marginal comments in the debate. The spokesmen for the church included Sebastian Hofmeister from Schaffhausen, Kaspar Megander, and Berchtold Haller. Haller, feeling inadequate to refute the arguments of the Anabaptists, had deep misgivings about this council-planned disputation. He earlier referred to it as a "tragedy."[2] The leading speaker for the Anabaptist brethren was Martin Weninger, whom Haller described as "a learned and shrewd man, an eloquent and astounding hypocrite."[3] After the disputation had begun, an anxious communication came from the Bernese council asking that the Anabaptists not be permitted to preach from the chancel.[4] The disputation continued from July 1 to July 9. At the final session the state churchmen declared that the doctrines of the Anabaptists had all been clearly refuted with Scripture. This the Anabaptists protested. The Anabaptists were then required to listen to the reading of the mandate of July 31, 1531. Three clerks had recorded the debates. This report was ordered to be printed and read from all the pulpits in the canton.

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[1] Müller, op. cit., p. 35.

[2] Haller to Bullinger, Bern, June 3, 1532, quoted by de Quervain, op. cit., p. 130.

[3] Haller to Bullinger, Bern, July 15, 1532, quoted by Ottius, op. cit., p. 57.

[4] Müller, op. cit., p. 35.

On August 4, 1532, the four chairmen of the Zofingen Disputation met at Aarau to review the manuscript record of the debate before it was published. To be impartial two Anabaptists were invited to read and confirm the record of the proceedings.[1] Christian Brügger again came from prison. Martin Weninger was invited but he could not be found, for he had fled to the Bernese Oberland. Thereupon the Landvögte in Interlaken, Thun, and in the Oberland were alerted to seize and imprison Weninger.[2] Brügger declined to renounce his views and so was banished from the canton. Christoph Froschauer of Zurich was commissioned to publish the record of the Zofingen Disputation. The Bern government again set its hope upon the publication of this record and so urged Froschauer to hasten the date of publication.[3]

The Zofingen Disputation failed to produce the result desired by the authorities.[4] Anabaptist activity continued without diminution. They began to preach more openly. A pastor at Dürrenrot reported that an Anabaptist had been preaching to throngs in the marketplace.[5] Instructions were sent out to all Landvögte on July 26 strictly commanding them to search out the Anabaptists and to punish them with greater severity.[6] A whole series of conciliar orders were issued to all areas, this suggesting that the movement was expanding.[7] On September 6 the Bern council reissued the Mandate of July 31, 1531, with the modification that in place of the ten shilling fine the impecunious should be imprisoned two days and nights.[8] On September 8 Haller wrote to Bullinger in Zurich that the Anabaptists "increase from day to day and the people in the country are easily swayed by their tricks."[1] Haller asked his Zurich friend to do something to speed up the printer Froschauer for, he explained, the people were charging that these publication delays were certain evidence that the truth was on the side of the Anabaptists. Nicholas Zurkinden, the Landvogt at Sumiswald, had even been so bold as to express the opinion that the Anabaptists had triumphed at Zofingen. This same Landvogt and the neighboring pastors received a stern letter from the Bern council, dated January 15, 1533.[2] The Landvogt was ordered to go from house to house in Sumiswald and Dürrenrot and invite the people to a public assembly where he was to read the council's letter and to warn the population forcefully that the mandate concerning Anabaptism must be obeyed. The Landvogt was required to take an oath that he would conscientiously carry out this operation.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[2] De Quervain, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] McGlothlin, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[5] Hans Käser, *Die Täuferverfolgungen im Emmental*, No. 2 of *Quellenhefte zur Geschichte und Heimatkunde des Amtes Trachselwald* (Bern: Paul Haupt, 1949), p. 18.

[6] De Quervain, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

[7] Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

[8] De Quervain, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

Berchtold Haller reported to Bullinger, probably sometime late in 1532, that the Bernese council had solicited his advice for the best methods to eliminate the Anabaptists.[3] "It was hoped," he said, "that I would advise death for these people; but this I did not do." He pointed out that the grounds for this evil were the preachers "who served their stomachs more than their parishes" and the governmental personnel among whom one perceived "sumptuousness, luxury, and avarice and a disregard of the divine Word." He went on: "We have now no Christian government here." Haller explained to the council that with the general immorality it was understandable that the Anabaptists should discard infant baptism.

The report of the Zofingen Disputation was finally ready for distribution. Bern ordered two hundred copies of the book for distribution to officials and pastors.[1] The council had hoped that the tide would be turned against the Anabaptists with the reissuance of the "Anabaptist Mandate" on September 6, 1532, and the reading from the pulpits of the report of the Zofingen Disputation.[2] When the Anabaptist movement continued unabated, the council established on January 23, 1533, a special commission to study the problem.[3] The commission consisted of the six-member Chorgericht, supplemented by four additional council members.

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[1] Haller to Bullinger, Bern, September 8, 1532, quoted by de Quervain, op. cit., p. 134.

[2] Käser, op. cit., p. 18.

[3] Haller to Bullinger, October (?), 1532, Bern, quoted by Gottfried Strasser, "Der schweizerische Anabaptismus zur Zeit der Reformation," Berner Beiträge zur Geschichte der Schweizerischen Reformationskirchen, ed. by Friedrich Nippold (Bern: K. J. Wyss, 1884), pp. 234-35.

## An Interim of Moderation, 1533-1535

The special commission submitted recommendations on January 24 which foreshadowed a change of policy in the direction of moderation.[4] The majority resolutions were as follows: (1) one should seek to convince the Anabaptists in friendly discussion from God's Word; (2) if this remained fruitless, they should be enjoined to be silent about their doctrines, and then allowed peace as other inhabitants; (3) they should no longer be "ducked," banished, or drowned; (4) they should rather be confined to prison at their own expense and if their funds became exhausted the government should maintain them in prison on bread and water until they capitulated or died. Implying a lack of confidence in the ability of the clergy, it was suggested that non-clerical learned men and former Anabaptists should seek out and counsel the Anabaptists.

The Bern council was in no hurry to implement the commission's recommendations. Haller informed Bullinger that, although it was recognized that the earlier vigorous persecution had been ineffective, the council was not united as to what measures to employ in the future.[5] Some council members were said to advocate lifetime imprisonment, others execution, and some doubted whether it was really right to use the sword against the Anabaptists. The council decided on January 31 to write to Strassburg for a copy of the Anabaptist ordinance used there, which it had heard was a "very fine, rigorous, godly ordinance."[1] The council was astonished to receive the reply from Strassburg that the city had no special ordinance concerning the Anabaptists. Strassburg reported that the following policies had been followed: (1) if the Anabaptists promised to obey and neither established nor attended Anabaptist meetings, they then were left undisturbed, regardless of rebaptism; (2) those who would neither obey nor were amenable to instruction in prison and who continued to visit Anabaptist meetings were banished and the city had nothing further to do with them; (3) if any returned and swore to assume the duties of citizenship, they were reaccepted.

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[1] De Quervain, op. cit., p. 134.

[2] Müller, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

[3] De Quervain, op. cit., p. 135.

[4] The recommendations submitted by the commission are printed in the article by Adolf Fluri, "Das bernische Täufermandat vom 2. Marz 1533," Zwingliana, I, No. 9 (1901), 196-200.

[5] Haller to Bullinger, late 1532, quoted in Ottius, op. cit., p. 56; cf. Haller to Bullinger, Bern, February 9, 1533, Epistolae ab Ecclesiae Helve-

The Strassburg report was sufficient to persuade the council to adopt the commission's proposals for a more moderate policy. A new mandate was issued on March 2, 1533, which admitted in the prefatory statement that the Anabaptists had been flourishing despite the last mandate; hence, changes were required.[2] The new mandate consisted of the commission's recommendations of January 24 with the addition that Anabaptists should be sent to Bern only when there was no prison in the locality. Essentially the new policy provided for decentralization in the handling of the Anabaptist problem. Further, it promised the Anabaptists peace if they at least outwardly conformed to the church order.

The Mandate of March 2, 1533, qualified but did not annul the earlier mandates of 1527 and 1531. This was explained in a new set of instructions

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ticae Reformatoribus vel ad eos scriptae, ed. Johann K. Füssli (Zurich, 1742), pp. 96-98.

[1] De Quervain, op. cit., p. 135.

[2] For a copy of the mandate see de Quervain, op. cit., p. 244.

sent to local officials on April 4, 1533.[1] Everyone, especially the Anabaptists, were to attend at least the Sunday sermon, allow the children to be baptized, and obey all other ordinances. Whosoever did not comply would be punished the first time with one night and day of imprisonment, the second time with two days, and so on. However, no one would be compelled to partake of communion. Apparently some Anabaptists did comply with the requirement to attend the established church services. One reluctant Anabaptist was heard to murmur during the sermon: "The preacher lies" and was thereupon summoned into court.[2] During the years 1533 and 1534 few Anabaptist names are mentioned in the Bernese records. The explanation for this is that most of the imprisoned no longer were brought to Bern, but were imprisoned locally. Further, the government was more interested in ferreting out the "ringleaders" of the Anabaptists than in arresting Anabaptists wholesale. Despite this decentralized handling of the problem, the city council continued to be vigilant. For example, on October 23, 1533, the council sent instructions to a number of Landvögte to seize Anabaptists enroute to a meeting at Winznau in Canton Solothurn and to return them to the authorities at their place of residence.[3]

The council was not satisfied with only issuing mandates concerning the requirements of church membership and the punishments for nonconformists. It counseled the clergy in a set of instructions on February 16, 1534, to be better preachers and pastors.[4] The preachers were to read the provisions of the mandate on Anabaptism to their congregations and to warn them of the punishments. Pastors were to visit prisoners and convince them of their errors. The preachers were to instruct their people in the errors of the Anabaptists and the clergy also were asked to prepare for publication a treatise on the falsehood of Anabaptist teaching. The judges in church courts were to be "respectable men."

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[1] Müller, op. cit., p. 71.

[2] De Quervain, op. cit., p. 138.

[3] Ibid.

[4] For a copy of the instructions to the pastors see Müller, op. cit., pp. 71-72.

Berchtold Haller evaluated this more moderate strategy in a letter to Martin Butzer, August 24, 1534.[1] He explained in a tone of exasperation that the Anabaptist leaders were more obstinate and headstrong than learned and pious. The council had imprisoned them, but they remained intractable. Their number had so increased that the prisons were overflowing. Haller was disturbed to observe that the best and the simplest folk were seduced by this movement. He did not want the Gospel to be stained with blood, but these people were a danger to the state and therefore could not be tolerated. Because of the obstinacy and unrelenting opposition of the Anabaptists, Haller explained that the council was ready to restore the punishment of "ducking" if the clergy would approve. The government was also ready to send out deputies to receive from every person in the city and countryside an oath promising not to violate in word or deed the church ordinances of the state. If one refused to take the oath, the council would decide whether to sell this individual's possessions and, allowing him the money from the sale, banish him from the canton. This was the background to the new mandate of November 8, 1534, which was adopted upon recommendation of the Chorgericht.[2]

The Mandate of 1534 was aimed, according to the title, both against the Anabaptists and the Roman Catholics. The introductory articles declared that "to the right and the left" were sects which injured and disgraced the Christian magistracy. Without law and order, it was explained, no Christian discipline, peace, or unity was possible. The council stated that the true faith could neither be given nor taken away by men, that it was rather a gift of God. Therefore, the council could establish ordinances only in outward things. For the purpose of "purifying and uniting our church" the council introduced, first, a set of five articles with sharper provisions concerning attendance at preaching and communion services, including the requirement that all marriage ceremonies be conducted publicly in the church. Second, every inhabitant who refused to take an oath pledging obedience to the ecclesiastical ordinances was to be banished.

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[1] Haller to Butzer, Bern, August 24, 1534, quoted by de Quervain, op. cit., pp. 139-40.

[2] For a copy of the mandate see ibid., pp. 245-46.

The ever-alert central government continued to send forth a stream of communications to local officials advising them in matters concerning the Anabaptists. Occasionally these instructions were tempered with a humane spirit. An Anabaptist woman, for example, was released from prison because of illness.[1] The Landvogt at Heimiswil was advised not to imprison pregnant women or mothers with small children, but rather only to warn them and leave them quietly alone.[2] This concession, however, was withdrawn.[3] Earlier in 1535 the records indicate a marked increase in the number of arrests. On January 30, 1535, a total of nineteen persons from all parts of the canton were summoned before the council to answer charges of having attended Anabaptist meetings.[4] On March 5, 1535, the government ordered all Landvögte where there were Anabaptists to investigate in town and country the number who had refused obedience to the Mandate of 1534.[5] These instructions were sent to Aarburg, Wangen, Aarwangen, Bipp, Landshut, Trachselwald, Signau, and Sumiswald--areas to the east in the Emmental and to the north in the Aargau.

The Bernese council tightened up the centralized control and reintroduced the death penalty in a mandate of March 13, 1535, which was to be a supplement to the Mandate of 1534.[6] Those who refused to take the oath of submission to the ecclesiastical order were to be imprisoned for eight days in the city of Bern. If they took the oath, they could be set free. If they refused, they were to be taken to the border and exiled. There they were to be told that if they returned, the men would be executed with the sword and the women drowned. Bern was confident that this new mandate would prove effective. When Basel warned Bern on April 29, 1535, that Anabaptists were meeting in a certain section of Bernese territory, Bern replied that there was nothing to the rumor and that in any event a new mandate promised to root out the sect completely.[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 141.

[2] Ibid., p. 142.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., p. 143.

[5] Ibid.

[6] For a copy of the mandate see ibid., p. 247.

## The Return to Rigorous Persecution, 1535-1541

Beginning in 1535 the government made a determined, canton-wide effort to arrest every Anabaptist who refused to take the ecclesiastical oath. Anabaptist hunters (Täuferjäger) were deputized by the central government and the Landvögte to ferret out Anabaptists.[2] These deputies received one pound for every Anabaptist they delivered to the authorities and if their hunting was in vain they were nonetheless paid for their effort. These efforts were often organized as concerted drives with many Täuferjäger participating in the chase. Information concerning these police activities is derived from the records of the treasurer of the Bernese council who often made payment to those "hunting down Anabaptists."[3] Often Anabaptists fled for the borders when a hunt was rumored. The city council received word in June 1535 that approximately three hundred Anabaptists from Rued in the Aargau area had escaped into Lucerne territory.[4] Bern promptly wrote to Catholic Lucerne urging that these Anabaptist refugees be arrested and that mutual security measures be adopted to prevent this practice of fleeing across the borders.[5] In the autumn of 1535 many Anabaptists appear to have requested and obtained travel permits (Ausweise) that they could leave the land.[6]

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[1] Ibid., p. 144.

[2] Geiser, op. cit., p. 177.

[3] Müller, op. cit., p. 72.

[4] Müller, op. cit., p. 73.

[5] De Quervain, op. cit., p. 146.

[6] Ibid., p. 147.

In their new "get-tough policy" the city council sent many Anabaptists to the executioner's block. More than a century later a prisoner, Hans Lörsch, had opportunity to copy from the prison records (Turmbücher) the names of forty Anabaptists who had been killed in Bern. This list found its way into the first German edition of the Martyrs' Mirror printed at Ephrata, Pennsylvania, in 1748.[1] Among the list of forty martyrs are twenty-seven to thirty who were executed during the period from 1535 to 1541.[2] Of these at least seven were women who were drowned. The record reveals that the council paid eight pounds, rather than the usual one pound, for the capture of Moritz Losenegger, a particularly zealous leader.[3] Thirteen or fourteen were executed in the single year of 1538.

In a careful study of the extant governmental records, Theodor de Quervain finds evidence that in Bern during the years 1534 through 1540 at least 158 Anabaptists were imprisoned, 109 banished, and 20 executed.[4] He concludes that this was only a partial list.[5] Not all Anabaptists arrested were brought to Bern. The treasurer's records often fail to report how many Anabaptists the sergeants brought in, as for example the notation: "Weibel von N., bracht touffer." The results of many of the major Anabaptist "hunts" were not stated. The notices concerning executions and imprisonments were often so brief that no evidence is given as to the crime. Undoubtedly many of the prisoners brought to Bern from the towns of the Emmental were Anabaptists, but the records are frequently silent as to the crime.

This carefully conceived program of persecution was always hindered by the sympathetic help given the Anabaptists by their neighbors.[6] In a later generation these sympathizers of the Anabaptists were to be known as the "halfway Anabaptists" (*Halbtäufer*).[1] The persistency of the Anabaptists aroused the Bern government to ever greater exasperation. The exiled Anabaptists returned again and again to Bernese soil and thus strengthened the brethren in their nonconformity.

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[1] Thieleman J. van Braght, Der blutige Schauplatz oder Märtyrerspiegel der Taufgesinnten (Ephrata, Pa., 1748); also in the English edition, Martyrs' Mirror, pp. 1129-30.

[2] Gratz, op. cit., pp. 164-67.

[3] De Quervain, op. cit., p. 155.

[4] Ibid., p. 146.

[5] Ibid., p. 145.

[6] Müller, op. cit., p. 15.

A group of Anabaptists at Gross Höchstetten and Signau in the Emmental urged through a local clergyman that the Bernese government summon another public disputation where the Anabaptists could defend themselves against the charges of their enemies.[2] On February 14, 1538, the council, agreeing to the request, summoned a disputation to begin March 11, 1538, to and from which the Anabaptists were guaranteed safe-conduct.[3] The church and state side was represented by four presiding officials from the two city councils, two recording clerks, and twenty clergymen including Sebastian Meyer, two other city churchmen, and two officials from each church district (*Kapitel*). The two ex-Anabaptists, Rappenstein and Pfistermeyer, who had also been at Zofingen, were again invited to adorn the assembly by their presence. Thirty-nine Anabaptists, including five foreigners, attended. This is the oldest major list of Bernese Anabaptists.[4] The foreign Anabaptists came from Bavaria, Innsbruck in the Tyrol, Schaffhausen, and the Canton of Zurich, while the Bernese Anabaptists were well distributed from the regions of Aargau, Emmental, and Oberland. The city council had high expectations for this public debate because Hans Pfistermeyer had recanted his Anabaptist belief after the Disputation of 1531 and

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[1] For a discussion of the "halfway Anabaptists" see John Horsch, *Mennonites in Europe* (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1942), pp. 394-97.

[2] Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

[3] An unpublished typewritten transcript of this disputation, made in 1912 by Heinrich Türler from Vol. 80 of the "Unnützen Papiere" in the Staatsarchiv Bern, is in the possession of the Goshen College Library. It is entitled: "Acta Des Gesprächs zwüschenn Predicanntenn vnnd Touffbruderenn Ergangen, Inn der Statt Bernn von xja Mertzeuns, bisz of den XVIja Desselben Monats Inn MDXXXVIIIten Jar" (hereafter cited as "Bern Disputation of 1538").

[4] For a list of the Anabaptists see Geiser, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-79.

Martin Weninger, an Anabaptist spokesman at Zofingen in 1532, had since returned to the established church of Schaffhausen.[1] During the course of the debate the churchmen repeatedly referred to Rappenstein and Pfistermeyer as exemplary persons who had returned to the true church. The churchmen addressed the Anabaptists as "brethren" (_Touffbrüdern_) until the final decision of the presidents was read--when they dropped the suffix "brethren." The churchmen seem to have been speaking not so much to the Anabaptists as to the councilmen. Their attitude toward the Anabaptists was one of learned condescension. It seemed to be a theater-piece to give the Anabaptists the appearance of their day in court and thus provide a legal basis for the persecution.[2] On Sunday, March 17, the assembly met to receive the decision of the presidents. The Anabaptists were declared defeated in debate. They had refused to accept instruction from the Bible, it was explained, and had refused to confess their error and unite with the true church. Although they had been promised a copy of the proceedings, this was denied them.[3] It was disappointing to the authorities that only one of the Anabaptists recanted his views. Indicative of the dissatisfaction of the council with this debate was the decision neither to publish the proceedings nor to hold any further public debates. At the end of the disputation the five foreign Anabaptists were instructed to leave the canton immediately. The Bernese, who had been previously banished, were ordered also to leave the land immediately. The other Anabaptists were granted only enough time to see their families, sell their property, and leave the land of Bern. Death was promised to any who would return to Bernese territory. At least four of these participants in the disputation were later executed at Bern.[4]

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 179.

[2] Jan P. Matthijssen, "The Bern Disputation of 1538," _MQR_, XXII (January, 1948), 22.

[3] Müller, _op. cit._, p. 80.

[4] Gratz, _op. cit._, pp. 165-68.

Repeated like an old refrain, the Bernese council in 1538 reported by way of instructions to the local officials of the Aargau that the Anabaptists "are increasing rather than decreasing."[1] The resourceful council decided this time to take a census of all Anabaptists in every district of the canton. As was often to be discovered in future attempts to take a census, the *Landvögte* could secure no accurate count of the Anabaptists, because the Anabaptists comprised an underground movement and lived in remote regions. Further, no *Landvogt* would want to admit having large numbers of these dissenters in his district. Thus, the 1538 census recorded the ridiculously low figures of only four or five Anabaptists at Burgdorf, two women at Aarburg, twenty-seven earlier at Sumiswald but now eight, three women at Bipp, "many" at Signau, earlier many at Trachselwald but now not more than nine.[2] This census was preparatory to a new mandate.

The mandate which the council issued on September 6, 1538, breathed a spirit of wrath toward the "incurably obstinate" and "rebellious" Anabaptists.[3] The mandate commanded the officials as follows: (1) the Anabaptist elders, preachers, teachers, and ringleaders were to be "put to death by the sword without mercy;" (2) the male prisoners who would not recant were to be subjected to torture; (3) those along the thoroughfares--the customs officials, gate watchers, innkeepers, patrolmen, barbers--were to be vigilant to prevent any of the expelled people from returning to the country to sow and to harvest; (4) no Anabaptist was to be given shelter; (5) officials were to employ men to lie in wait day and night to capture the ringleaders and ministers; (6) the farms of Anabaptists, where there were no children, were to be sold if possible. The correspondence which the council continued to dispatch to the *Landvögte* evidenced a desire to destroy the movement once and for all.[4] The *Landvogt* at Aarburg was commanded to send all the Anabaptists to Bern. The mayor of Thun was ordered to "hunt down" the Anabaptists day and night and the *Landvogt* from Signau was instructed to help him. The Catholic Bishop of Basel was requested not to tolerate Anabaptists in his territory, but rather to help drive them out of the Münstertal.

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[1] Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

## A Relaxation in the Rigors of Persecution

The violence and severity of the persecution abated somewhat in 1541 due primarily to the influence of Hans Franz Nageli, the conqueror of the Vaud in 1536 and one of the city's distinguished citizens. He was sent by the Bernese government in 1536 as one of two ministers to the French court where the two were to seek to dissuade King Francis I from his policy of persecuting the Protestants.[1] He returned from this diplomatic mission with views of religious toleration that were broader than those of his fellow councilmen. These views he expressed to his colleagues on November 28, 1541, in a long address on "the origin and causes for the growth in the Anabaptist movement."[2] So unfamiliar were these ideas that the council secretary recorded the speech in Latin. Nägeli charged that the principal cause for Anabaptist strength was the indifference, imprudence, and immoral conduct of the clergy. The council acted that very day to reduce the severity of the punishment for Anabaptists.[3] Those who had violated their oath to obey the ecclesiastical ordinances were to be placed in neck irons as perjurers. They were to apologize to the community. If they fell away again from the truth, the authorities were permitted to use their discretion in punishment.

The government seems to have been less obsessed with the Anabaptist problem after 1541. Anabaptists continued to be executed--three in 1542 and 1543, one sometime between 1543 and 1566, one in 1566, and the last in 1571.

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[1] Blösch, "Hans Franz Nägeli," *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1875-1912), XXXIII, 220.

[2] Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

[3] *Ibid.*

A death sentence issued by the council in 1541 appealed to imperial law or right (nach khaiserlichen Recht) for legal justification--the only reference to imperial law in the Bernese records which were examined.[1] The last to be executed was Hans Haslibacher, who was beheaded in 1571 and about whose martyrdom a fellow prisoner wrote a poem of thirty-two stanzas. This poem, subsequently set to music, became one of the martyr hymns of the Swiss Anabaptists.[2] In November 1548 Bern sent out orders to local officials to be more stringent in their dealings with Anabaptists.[3] Heretofore, women had been fined five pounds and men ten pounds for attending Anabaptist services. The order of 1548 stated that these fines were to be levied on anyone who should attend such a service even out of idle curiosity. In 1551 the Anabaptists were reported to have increased substantially in numbers through the whole length of the Emmental.[4] An open letter was read in the pulpits of the Emmental stating that a fine of ten pounds would be levied on each Anabaptist who was caught and if he did not recant he would be punished by loss of life and possessions.[6] In 1552 a Hans Stähli was brought to trial for attending an Anabaptist meeting.[6] He told the story of having been arrested once before, escaping his guards, fleeing with his wife to Moravia, and being captured on a return visit to Bern. Already the exodus to Moravia had begun.

The strategy of persecution never received the full support of all those in responsible office and even less the support of all humble citizens. The public execution of Anabaptists did not create aversion so much as sympathy for the movement. The Bernese council, in discussing the Anabaptist problem in 1581, observed that the people witnessing the executions were often moved to great compassion.[1] A council member suggested that Tertullian's saying, "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church," was applicable to the Anabaptist movement.[2] Illustrative of this sympathetic attitude toward the Anabaptists was Nicholas Zurkinden, a member of the council of Bern who earlier had been a Landvogt in the Emmental. Zurkinden had observed and had been appalled by the executions in the late 1530's. In 1554 he wrote his friend John Calvin, recalling those experiences:

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[1] Ibid., p. 75.

[2] Ausbund, No. 140; an English translation is available in the Martyrs' Mirror, pp. 1128-29.

[3] Heiz, op. cit., p. 138.

[4] Müller, op. cit., p. 83.

[5] Gratz, op. cit., p. 157.

[6] Geiser, op. cit., p. 190.

> I freely confess that I also belong to the number of those who desire to see the sword used as seldom as possible as a means of compulsion upon the opponents of the faith; and I am moved not so much by the Scripture passages which are cited to keep the edge of the sword away from the treatment of matters of faith as the unbelievable examples which have occurred in our time in the punishment of the Anabaptists. I was witness here when an eighty year old grandmother and her daughter, a mother of six children, were led to their death, for no other reason than that they rejected infant baptism in accord with the familiar teaching of the Anabaptists. This one example out of many may suffice. It has deeply shaken me and I fear that the authorities may not remain within the limits of principle which you assign to them, namely that only the worst destroyers of faith and religion are to be punished with death. . . . I know magistrates who regret to have participated in death sentences and who would rather have a hundred enemies than to have the death of a single human being on their consciences. I speak now not of Servetus and other blasphemers, but of countless good persons.[3]

With the Anabaptists receiving this kind of compassionate support, the movement could not be obliterated.

In the second half of the sixteenth century Anabaptists continued to persist in remote valleys and in alpine retreats, and there continued to be mandates issued against their activities: 1564, 1566, 1567, 1579, 1585, 1597. The death penalty was never employed after 1571, but other punishments did not lack for cruelty. The mandate of 1564 called for the "burning down and utter destruction of their houses and barns."[4] An edict of 1567 declared children of Anabaptist couples to be illegitimate and not legal heirs.[5] The mandate of 1585 ordered that Anabaptist leaders who were not Bernese should be stretched on the rack to extract information concerning their labors.[1] A fine of one hundred pounds was to be exacted for sheltering an Anabaptist. The dogged efforts of the authorities to annihilate the movement resulted by the time of the eighteenth century in the extermination of Anabaptism from all sections of the canton of Bern except the Emmental. Some of the brethren had fled as refugees westward to the Jura region of Switzerland and others to the distant asylum of Moravia.

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[1] Müller, op. cit., p. 87.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Oechsli, Quellenbuch . . . , p. 347.

[4] Müller, op. cit., p. 84.

[5] Ibid.

## The Writings of the Anabaptists

As humble, rural folk and as a persecuted people the Bernese Anabaptists had little opportunity to articulate their faith in writing. In the Bernese State Archives is a manuscript of seven articles of polity whose authorship has been attributed to the Anabaptists.[2] These articles from about the year 1527 pertain to the inner life of the congregation but say nothing concerning social ethics and church-state relationships, This is not to be confused with the widely circulated seven-article Confession of Schleitheim, which, although not considered a normative creed, appears to have represented accurately the thought of the Bernese Anabaptists.

Recently a handwritten document, bearing the date of April 12, 1529, was discovered in the attic of an Anabaptist family in the Emmental.[3] This remarkable treatise from the earliest years of the Anabaptist movement is entitled: "The Judgment of the Sword with the Distinctive [Types] of Power of the Three Principalities of the World, the Jews, and the Christians, Together With Related Matters" (Das Urteil von dem Schwert mit underschidlichem gewalt dreier Fürstenthum der Welt, Juden, und Christen, mit Anderen Anliegenden sachen). The author of the work is an unknown brother, Clemens Adler, who may not have been a native of this area because his name is not typically Bernese. Although one is not able to verify when this treatise found its way into the possession of Emmental Anabaptists, this writing is examined here because it is an Anabaptist document of importance of the early sixteenth century and it may have had some relation to the early history of Bernese Anabaptism.

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[1] Ibid., p. 89.

[2] A copy of the seven articles of polity is to be found in Müller, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

[3] Samuel Geiser, "Bibliographical and Research Notes; an Ancient Anabaptist Witness for Nonresistance," MQR, XXV (January, 1951), 66-69, 72.

The unknown author, Clemens Adler, distinguishes the Kingdom of Christ in categorical terms from the other two principalities: the worldly government and the kingdom of the Jews. The Kingdom of Christ is spiritual. It is the Christian Church. This spiritual kingdom, whose Lord is Christ, cannot have as its Lord an earthly, foreign king. This "kingdom of peace" is composed of all who have become "one in faith through the word of the Lord," look unto Christ, and seek to become "conformable to the Lord." They do not quarrel, go to war, go to law, nor harm anyone. They kill no one. "Such a people are called the peaceful people." Christ, the king of peace puts "his peace in the depth of the hearts" of His own. The children of peace "have peace with everyone, harm no one in any respect, neither in body nor in goods, but endure at the hands of all men all kinds of injustice which may be done to them; yea, for the love of Christ they love their enemies, do good to them and pray for them. . . . Even if the world rises up against them, rages and storms against them, yet they rage and storm against none." Those who adhere to Christ, "the suffering lamb" (dem geduldigen Lämmlein), will destroy no one, "neither the heathen nor any man at all, neither with the punishment of the law nor with a worldly sword nor with anything, yea they kill no one. . . ."

"There is a difference as great as between heaven and earth," writes Adler, "between Christ and Moses, between the church and the children of this world." In the old law of Moses the Jews were commanded, "to punish transgressors with bloody punishment." Christ, however, does not want his children to resist evil in any way, neither with litigation nor with any other form of revenge. The Christian suffers all evil at the hand of other men. Vengeance is God's alone; He will repay. No Christian needs to have a criminal judge (Blutrichter); to judge concerning crime is a matter only for heathen. The law of the church is a discipline (Verordnung) of Christ which applies only to the true Christian, neither to the heathen nor the Jew. The author speaks forth against religious persecution: "How can one keep the command of Christ to preach repentance unto the remission of sins, if one robs sinners of mercy by the sword? Since Christians are obliged to forgive sinners their sins, how could one then condemn sinners to death?" No one can amend his life, if he is put to the sword.

The author of the treatise explains that it is easy to determine who is and who is not a Christian. "Our neighbors, the sword users (Schwärtler), think they are Christians," he writes, "but their works and deeds prove something much different." He adds that they are "neither heathen, Jews, nor Christians," in fact they do not themselves know what they are. "They mix together and patch the one to the other, namely, the sword of the world, of Moses, and of Christ." The author insists that "worldly government. . . also the law of Moses, neither can nor dare be found in the Christian church." He adds a final paragraph concerning the oath and swearing. God will punish those who take the name of God in vain. One should swear allegiance to God alone.

This treatise has been reviewed at length because it brings from the first decade an eloquent exposition of the thought of the Anabaptists concerning the state and society: their spirit of world-renunciation, their disavowal of force, their theology of martyrdom and suffering, their conception of the church as sharply separated from the state and the world, their opposition to the death penalty and other harsh punishments. It is interesting to note that court litigation was excluded from the rightful activity of the Christian. Also of interest is the author's criticism of the "Christian state" and

Volkskirche as a bad patchwork of heathen, Jewish, and Christian elements. No word is spoken in this treatise of the positive functions which the government may have apart from the fact that the magistracy is established for the heathen and for those living under the Jewish or natural law.

## Disputations and Hearings

The Bernese government shared the enthusiasm of the time for public disputations. Five public debates were held with Anabaptists. In addition the record is preserved of an extensive hearing in which Anabaptists presented their views under the cross examination of the authorities. These disputations were conducted with all the legal courtesies. They were, however, not impartial proceedings because the council--which summoned the debates, presided over the discussions, and rendered the final judgments--and the spokesmen for the state church were both of one mind. The final decisions were always against the Anabaptists. The proceedings were recorded by government secretaries. These records were no doubt edited to reflect favorably the state and church party, but nonetheless they would seem to be reasonably fair records. Although Hans Pfistermeyer was weaned from Anabaptism in the Disputation of 1531 and another person at the Disputation of 1538, the real victors at these public debates seem to have been the Anabaptists. They generally impressed observers with their sincere piety and their amazing command of Scriptural knowledge. The Anabaptists, also, seemed to receive a new burst of vitality following each of these disputations. Perhaps in recognition of these facts, the council after 1538 chose never to have another disputation.

No official record has been preserved of the first and second public disputations--that of May 21, 1527, and that of January 22, 1528. There is a report of doubtful value of the second disputation, a polemical tract prepared probably by Conrad Schmidt, a Zurich clergyman, who attended the debate.[1]

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[1] Die Predigen so von den froembden Predicanten/ die allenthalben haer/ zuo Bernn vff dem Gespraech oder Disputation gewesen/ beschehen sind. Ver-

Schmidt reported that no understanding could be reached on the oath and the use of the sword by the magistracy.

A major source of information for Bernese Anabaptism is the record of a hearing on May 24, 1529, when a group of Anabaptist prisoners were interrogated by a committee of clergymen and city councilors.[1] Two of the prisoners, Hans Seckler and Hans Dreier, may have been given a separate cross-examination at about this time.[2] Most interesting are their somewhat divergent responses to the key question as to whether a Christian can be a magistrate. Hans Seckler stated that a Christian could be a magistrate. Heini Seiler declared that the Lord acknowledges no magistrate as Christian in the whole world. Seiler thought that one could remain as a magistrate so long as one administered and judged according to the Word of God, but, he added, that would not be very long. A magistrate receives taxes and tithes and no Christian could engage in such activities. Hans Dreier, like Seiler, thought a Christian could be a magistrate, but not for long. Heini Seiler's wife explained that the magistrate was established from "Above" to use the sword to protect the poor, the widow and the orphan and to encourage the good and to punish "in body and property" the disobedient. All the prisoners affirmed that a Christian was to be obedient to the magistrate in so far as this did not violate the commands of God. Heini Seiler expressed it thus: "One should be obedient to the magistrate in all things that are godly and right, not out of compulsion, but out of free will." Vyt Oettli answered neither "yes" nor "no" to the question whether a Christian could be a magistrate. His wife gave an ambiguous response to the same question: "He who does the work of Christ, is a

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werffen der Articklenn vnd Stucken/ so die Widertouffer vff dem Gespraech zuo Bernn/ vor ersamen grossen Radt fuergewendt habend (Zurich: Christoph Froschauer, 1528); cf. also Müller, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

[1] Akt. Bern, 1040-43.

[2] An extract from the proceedings involving Seckler and Dreier is to be found in Müller, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

Christian." She added that no Christian could persecute another, even though the latter were a godless person.

All were agreed that no Christian was permitted to swear an oath. Concerning the question of interest, taxes, and tithes, they responded that a Christian should pay these obligations, but dared not receive them. To the question whether the magistrate had the right to banish the disobedient, Heini Seiler answered that the Lord had created the earth and all that was therein and that God ordained man to use it as long as he enjoyed the pleasure of God. Implicit here was the affirmation that banishment was contrary to divine will. All denied the charge that they had wives in common and explained that anyone practicing this would not be their brother. They explained that community of goods, while practiced by the early Christians, was not a command of God; the Christian should simply share freely with the needy. Finally, they all justified their separation from the established church because it was not a pure brotherhood in Christ.

Records of the proceedings at the three major disputations have been preserved. These three public debates include the first one on April 19, 1531, at Bern, the second from July 1 to 9, 1532, at Zofingen, and the third from March 11 to 17, 1538 at Bern. The three disputations were similar in character in that the same issues were presented and the state churchmen and Anabaptists articulated their respective positions in like manner from one disputation to the next. No marked alteration or progression in ideas is apparent from one disputation to the next. As one studies the records of these debates one observes that the two groups held much in common. One clergyman at the Zofingen Disputation expressed it thus: "We are united in the essential articles of faith and are divided only on external matters."[1] Each side had difficulty coming to terms with the arguments of the opposition because the two sides operated on different levels. The Anabaptists quoted, apparently by memory, an abundance of Scripture and formulated their conclusions frequently by simply paraphrasing Scripture. The discourses of the state churchmen also were laden with scriptural references, but the clergy in their argumentation often appealed in the final analysis to learned authority, tradition, and to prudential considerations. The seven topics discussed at the Disputation of 1538 were the essential problems faced at all three debates: the relation between the Old and New Testaments, the ministry, the church, baptism, the oath, the magistracy, and the ban. In the analysis to follow attention is focused on the issues concerning the state church, magistracy, and the oath. First, the views of the churchmen and then those of the Anabaptists will be considered.

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[1] "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," p. 27b.

The differences between the churchmen and the Anabaptists were in part derived from their divergent views concerning the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. Where the Anabaptists accented the discontinuity, the churchmen emphasized the continuity between the Old and the New Testaments. With the exception of the ceremonial law, the Old Testament was considered as still authoritatively applicable.[1] This had important consequences in the ethics of the churchmen. (1) There is a straight line from Adam, via Abraham, Moses, and Christ, down through the ages to the Reformers. The church of the Reformation is the true church. The Anabaptists are only a sect. They do harm to the cause of the Reformation because they draw their membership largely from the most devout, but too impatient, members in the Reformed Church. The Christian Church, like the Jewish nation of the Old Testament, is inclusive of the whole population.[2] As the children were under the covenant in the Old Testament, they are now under the covenant in the New Testament. Infant baptism is the New Testament form of the Old Testament circumcision.[3] The idea of a separated, exclusive church which uses the ban is wrong.[4] The church should patiently permit the tares to remain in the field until the final harvest. The magistrate will punish crime and vice; God will punish the sins of the spirit. (2) The oath of the Old Testament was not explicitly prohibited by Jesus.[1] Jesus simply disapproved of the excessive use of mental reservation by the Pharisees. The oath has been ordained and introduced into society because of human perversity. The oath is, therefore, Christian. (3) The role of the state again must be seen in terms of the continuity of Old and New Testament. The churchmen charged that the Anabaptists distinguished too sharply between flesh and spirit. Man is flesh and spirit. Christians are citizens both of the spiritual kingdom and the earthly state. The magistracy is ordained of God to punish the evil and protect and advance the good.[2] Sebastian Meyer in 1538 asked: "Now what secular unbeliever would do that?"[3] It is essential that Christians be in the magistracy to insure good government.[4] When God wishes to advance the welfare of a people, he gives them a pious ruler. Examples of such rulers are to be found not only in the Old Testament--Melchizedek, Abraham, Joseph, Samuel, Daniel--but also in the New Testament--Nicodemus, Cornelius, Paulus Sergius, and Erastus.[5] A most admirable example of the merits of having a ruler who is a Christian is the Emperor Constantine.[6] Sebastian Meyer turned to the Anabaptists in the 1538 debate saying: "Dear brethren. . . . you can thank God for the kind of Christian magistrate you now have and you do not know how fateful it would be for your life and limb if there were no Christian magistrate.[7] As to the rights of coercion, the penal law of the Old Testament is delegated to the God-fearing magistrate. Old Testament punishments, not expressly prohibited by Jesus, are still permitted. The Christian magistrate need feel no qualms of conscience about judging crime, administering punishment and even wielding the sword, because he does it not as a Christian individual, but by virtue of his divinely ordained office. "The person does not kill, but rather the office."[1]

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[1] "Bern Disputation of 1538," pp. 16-23.

[2] Ibid., p. 84-88.

[3] Ibid., p. 123.

[4] Ibid., p. 261.

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[1] Ibid., p. 199.

[2] "Bern Disputation of 1531," p. Dva.

[3] "Bern Disputation of 1538," p. 255.

[4] Ibid., p. 253.

[5] "Bern Disputation of 1531," p. C viii b.

[6] "Bern Disputation of 1538," pp. 256-57.

[7] Ibid., p. 257.

The argumentation of the churchmen in behalf of the state church concept rested not only on a belief in the continuing authority of the Old Testament and on prudential considerations, but it consisted also of appeals to love and forbearance. If the Anabaptists had sufficient love for the church and for their weaker neighbors, they would not separate themselves as a sect from the established church. The Anabaptists, it was argued, are wanting in patience and forbearance. This appeal to the principle of love apparently was the decisive factor in convincing Hans Pfistermeyer during the course of the Disputation of 1531 to return to the established church.[2] Other factors perhaps also contributed to his change of faith. The churchmen at the Disputation of 1531 were eminently kind and fair to their adversary. They spoke in a scriptural idiom and cited an abundance of Scripture--the only authority satisfying to an Anabaptist like Pfistermeyer.[3] Further, the churchmen were sufficiently thoughtful of Pfistermeyer's doubts and reservations that they said to him in essence: "We can appreciate your problems. We do not insist that you concur with us on all issues under discussion. We only ask that you return to the true church and in due course of time you will then undoubtedly find satisfactory answers to the questions which still perplex you."

The Anabaptist participants in the three disputations were at one with Clemens Adler, the author of the "Judgment of the Sword. . . . ," in viewing the Christian brotherhood as categorically separated from the world and its evil works.[4] The people of God are a separated people.[5] The Christian church is and probably will continue to be only a small group among the total population. For them the New Testament, which in major respects replaces the revelation of the Old Testament, has a concrete normativeness which transcends temporal logic. This other-worldly, New Testament discipleship is evidenced in the Anabaptist critique of the established church and in the Anabaptist principles governing the Christian's relationship to the state.

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[1] "Bern Disputation of 1531," p. F v b.

[2] Cf. _ibid_., p. D v b.

[3] _Ibid_., p. A iii b.

[4] "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," p. 29b; "Bern Disputation of 1538," pp. 233, 238.

[5] _Ibid_., p. 232.

(1) The Anabaptists opposed the state established church essentially on moral grounds. These churches as a whole were thought to be unchristian because the entire population was compelled to hold membership regardless of personal convictions; consequently the official churches were filled with unrepentant and undisciplined sinners. "The world cannot be the church."[1] The Volkskirche or people's church is not the church of Christ because it has no scriptural discipline. "There is no church without the ban."[2] It is an abomination before God that the state clergymen live on benefices derived from tithes, interest, and taxes.[3] The congregation, not the state, shall care for the needs of its ministers.[4] Evangelists and ministers are to be called and ordained by the brotherhood; the magistracy has absolutely no responsibilities in the matter.[5]

(2) The Anabaptists at the three disputations affirmed the Pauline and Petrine doctrine that the magistracy was ordained of God to punish the evil and protect the good.[6] The foundation and starting point for all discussion was Romans 13.[7] The Anabaptists said that it made no difference what was the

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[1] "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," p. 29b.

[2] "Bern Disputation of 1538," p. 249.

[3] "Bern Disputation of 1531," p. D vi a.

[4] "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," pp. 124a-128a. [5] Ibid., p. 112a.

[6] "Bern Disputation of 1531," p. D v b; "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," p. 77b; "Bern Disputation of 1538," p. 249.

[7] "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," p. 86b; "Bern Disputation of 1538," pp. 249, 251.

religious affiliation of the magistrate; he could be a Papist or a Lutheran.[1] They pointed out that in the time of Christ the rulers were heathen.[2] They did not accept the contention of the churchmen that a Christian ruler was essential to good government. A non-Christian magistrate could be a servant of God.[3] In fact, they agreed, a magistrate is ipso facto not a Christian.[4] In this connection, one must remember that the Anabaptists defined the term "Christian" not in the broad, inclusive sense as pertaining to all nominal members of the church, but in the narrow, exclusive sense as applying to the "called-out brethren" of a small remnant church.

Repeatedly the Anabaptists denied the charge that they rejected the secular magistracy. It is not altogether clear whether the Anabaptists thought the magistracy had a functional value for themselves as earnest Christians. Hans Pfistermeyer declared in 1531: "The magistracy is required by all peoples, including Christian people."[5] One may presume that Pfistermeyer was referring not simply to nominal Christians, but rather to earnest Christians. An Anabaptist speaker at the Disputation of 1532 took a somewhat different view: "By the children of God no magistracy is required which uses the sword."[6] The qualifying phrase, "which uses the sword," might perhaps imply that Christians could benefit by a magistracy which neither warred nor used capital punishment. A number of Anabaptists spoke to this issue in 1538. "We are not opposed to the magistracy; let it remain, but not among Christians."[7] "There is a place for the magistrate and the sword for those who are outside the Christian church and need the fear of the sword to obey."[8] "In as much as

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[1] "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," p. 97b.

[2] Ibid., p. 85a.

[3] "Bern Disputation of 1531," p. D ii a.

[4] "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," p. 94b.

[5] "Bern Disputation of 1531," p. C viii a.

[6] "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," p. 103b.

[7] "Bern Disputation of 1538," p. 250.

[8] Ibid., p. 238.

Christ is head of his church, so does it not require a secular government.[1]

In interpreting the above statements it would seem that the Anabaptists were neither saying that the government did not serve the Christian nor that the Christian as an individual had no need of government. They were insisting rather that the magistracy had absolutely nothing to do with the life and polity of the church.[2] They were rejecting the idea of the state churchmen that there were essentially two orders in the church: the spiritual for the inner life and the temporal for external affairs and discipline.[3] They earnestly opposed any extension of the coercive power of the state into the life of the church.[4] The principle they enunciated was separation of church and state.

(3) The Anabaptists were unanimous in asserting that the Christian owes obedience to the state in so far as the commands of God are not violated in those duties.[5] The Christian gives this obedience not because of coercion, but rather out of a voluntary spirit.[6] The Christian pays taxes, tithes, interest, and customs as required by the magistracy.[7] However, a Christian may not collect tithes, taxes, and customs which are functions of civil authorities.[8]

(4) The Anabaptists declined to assume the responsibility of office in the magistracy. One of the key questions asked by the churchmen in each debate

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 242.

[2] "Bern Disputation of 1531," p. C viii a; "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," p. 83b.

[3] "Bern Disputation of 1538," p. 238.

[4] "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," pp. 78b-79a, 94b, 97b.

[5] "Bern Disputation of 1531," p. D v a; "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," p. 97b; "Bern Disputation of 1538," p. 248.

[6] "Bern Disputation of 1531," p. D v b.

[7] "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," pp. 78a, 97b, 106a.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 129a.

was this: "If a heathen magistrate should become a Christian, could he continue in his office?" Pfistermeyer in 1531 replied: "He could not long retain his office."[1] After extended discussion Pfistermeyer conceded that a Christian might remain in his office of the magistracy providing--and he had grave doubts here--he did not disobey the commands of God.[2] Usually the Anabaptists expressed themselves in terms of "doubt" as to whether a magistrate who becomes a Christian could remain in office.[3] The Christian could not be a magistrate because he had another vocation or calling to fulfill. If a member of the brotherhood were a ruler, it would undermine the equality of the brotherhood.[4] "A Christian is a servant, not a ruler."[5] "The Christian does not rule, but rather bears his cross and follows Christ in suffering."[6] Perhaps the most fundamental objection was that the magistrate rules with force; the Christian is nonresistant.[7] In reply to the churchmen's assertion that Christians in Apostolic times were often magistrates, the Anabaptists stated that there was no evidence that Nicodemus, Cornelius, Erastus, and Paulus Sergius remained in the magistracy after their conversion.[8] At Zofingen the Anabaptists argued that their opponents failed to present Biblical proof that magistrates may be Christians.[9] They were not impressed with the example of Constantine as a "great Christian emperor." To them the establishment of the church in the fourth century was but one step in the decline and fall of Christianity.

(5) The Anabaptists were united in disavowing all use of physical

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[1] "Bern Disputation of 1531," p. D i a.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. D v a.

[3] "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," pp. 91b, 103b.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 92a.

[5] "Bern Disputation of 1531," p. C viii a.

[6] "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," p. 83b.

[7] "Bern Disputation of 1538," p. 233.

[8] "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," p. 96a.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 99a.

coercion. The Christian suffers rather than resists evil.[1] Neither did Christ approve of killing nor did the Apostles ever resort to the sword.[2] They pointed to the fact that Peter did not turn Ananias and Sapphira over to the hangman but punished them with the "Spirit and Word of the Lord."[3] They denounced the "voice of the two-edged sword, the fetter, and the goad."[4] Their nonresistance expressed itself in numerous ways. The Anabaptists insisted that no Christian should seek justice in a court of law.[5] Frequently they voiced their opposition to the death penalty. They declared that faith cannot be coerced.[6] They announced their conscientious objection to participation in war. It is to be noted that they had far less to say about military service than about the death penalty, which was to them a much more immediate problem.

(6) The Anabaptists opposed without exception the swearing of oaths. They were convinced that Christ in the Sermon on the Mount prohibited the use of the oath.[7]

(7) The Anabaptists did not have much to say about serfdom but they did express their opposition to this system, both in the Disputation of 1531 and in that of 1532.[8]

## Conclusion

The political thought of the Bernese Anabaptists has been summarized in the review of the three major disputations. This need not be recapitulated.

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[1] "Bern Disputation of 1538," p. 237., 240.

[2] "Bern Disputation of 1531," p. D iii a; "Bern Disputation of 1538," p. 237.

[3] "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," p. 69a.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 94b.

[6] "Bern Disputation of 1531," p. D v b.

[7] "Bern Disputation of 1531," pp. Biib-Bvib; "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," pp. 106b-112b; "Bern Disputation of 1538," pp. 199-231.

[8] "Bern Disputation of 1531," pp. Bvib-Cviib; "Zofingen Disputation of 1532," pp. 87b-90b.

In their thinking concerning the political order the various Anabaptists apparently subscribed to a unified and basically similar body of principles. A unity exists between the treatise of Clemens Adler and the Anabaptist speakers at the disputations. Concerning the political views of the Anabaptists, the record of the disputations may be supplemented in two respects. (1) There is no evidence in the long history of Bernese Anabaptism that the movement ever had revolutionary aberrations.[1] In the Disputation of 1538 a churchman made a casual reference to the tragedy of Münster and to the Melchiorites.[2] No trace, however, has been found of a tendency among the Bernese Anabaptists to seek power for the purpose of revolutionizing the social, economic, and political order. (2) The Anabaptists did not explicitly express a view on religious liberty. Nonetheless, essential elements of a concept of religious liberty are to be found in the teachings of the Bernese brethren. They strenuously advocated the separation of the church from the state. They opposed coercion in matters of faith. They taught that the church consists of voluntary adherents.

The civil authorities of Bern were men of action rather than theorizers. They had little to say concerning their reasons for persecuting the Anabaptists. The Bernese mandates applying to the Anabaptists generally proceed directly to the itemizing of the punishments without a prologue justifying the action. Theory, although infrequently articulated, nonetheless lay behind the Bernese policy toward Anabaptist dissent.

(1) The city council conceived of itself as a Christian body presiding over a Christian community unified in all its social, religious and political aspects. The council was responsible for the external order of the church in the Bernese community; therefore, the council promulgated church laws, creeds, and requirements for public behavior. The Anabaptists and Roman Catholics

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[1] McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 31.

[2] "Bern Disputation of 1538," p. 240.

disobeyed these laws. This injured and disgraced the magistracy and in turn the community. The breakers of the community's laws were subject to punishment. The council explained that without law and order no Christian discipline, peace, or unity was possible within the community.

The council was careful to preserve the fiction that it regulated only external forms. The city authorities would have been satisfied if the Anabaptists had gone through the motions of conformity. The Anabaptists, with their fierce honesty, could not accept this solution.

(2) The council was shocked by the fact that the members of this movement refused to take an oath, the highest pledge of one's political loyalty and conformity and a divinely ordained symbol and covenant of the community. Often the refusal of the oath was the first evidence of an individual's Anabaptist convictions. In the early years of the movement coercive means were employed to extract an oath from the Anabaptists. This was particularly demanded at the time of an Anabaptist's banishment. This forced oath afforded the legal basis for persecution should the banished person return to his homeland. He was then punished for breaking the sacred oath rather than specifically for his Anabaptist faith. Despite all threats, the Anabaptists returned again and again from exile to their native communities. This breaking of the forced oath led the Anabaptists often to be decried as perjurers (_meineidige Täufern_).[1] By the time of the 1540's, perhaps earlier, the government seems to have become cognizant that the Anabaptist objection to the oath was derived from religious convictions rather than hostility to the political community. Therefore, the Anabaptists were permitted to give their simple pledge instead of the oath. This was an important concession granted by the government to the dissenters.

(3) The fear that the Anabaptists might stage a rebellion does not appear to have been a decisive factor motivating the city authorities to a policy

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[1] Appenzeller, "Solothurner Taufertum . . . ," _op. cit._, p. 133.

of persecution. The Anabaptists were occasionally called "rebellious," but that was probably just an off-hand kind of name calling.

(4) It is difficult to know whether imperial law, with its severe sanctions against the Anabaptists, had any influence upon the Bernese council. Only one instance was found--a death sentence--where imperial law was cited to justify the punishment.

(5) A major factor contributing to the continuous hostility of the state to the Anabaptists was the popularity of the movement among the rural people. Implicit in the actions and statements of the council was the fear that if the movement were granted a free hand it might grow to dangerously large proportions. Often it was noted that the Anabaptists robbed the established church of its most devout Christians. Out of a vague fear for the future of the established church and the political community that growth could not be tolerated.

In the mandates of the Bern government the pattern of punishment for the Anabaptists was in general three-fold: (1) imprisonment and/or fines for the first offenders with the promise of freedom for them should they recant; (2) banishment from the canton with a forced oath or a pledge never to return; (3) the pillory or the death sentence without trial for those who broke the oath by returning from exile. Supplementary to or variational upon these punishments were such techniques as "ducking," the use of the rack and other forms of torture to extract confessions and information, the confiscation of property, bread and water fare in prison, and a variety of forms of political and economic discrimination.

The Bernese government was remarkably resourceful in introducing from time to time new techniques for suppressing the movement. Friends and neighbors were forbidden under penalty to give food, comfort, or shelter to the Anabaptists. Deputies, *Täuferjäger*, were appointed to ferret out Anabaptists. Bonuses were given for each Anabaptist captured. Special drives were organized to hunt down Anabaptists. With ~~shrewd~~ judgment the government singled out the Anabaptist leaders as the ones particularly to be tracked down and to be administered the most severe punishments. The government used techniques of psychological warfare to fight the movement: the disputation, the printing press, community assemblies. The council worked vigorously to develop a more responsible clergy and well-ordered church so that the established church would be less of an offense to those inclined toward Anabaptism. Through a stream of instructions to the field and occasional "briefing meetings" the government endeavored to make the local pastors and officials more effective in combatting the movement. The government often encouraged pastors and officials to use the more winsome ways of personal counseling in winning the Anabaptists from their nonconformity. There was about the government policy a certain rhythm of severity and moderation, neither extreme prevailing for long.

One may properly ask in conclusion how effective the Bernese government was in its efforts to eradicate the Anabaptist movement. One can conclude that the government was reasonably effective. The Anabaptists were eliminated from the city of Bern by 1530 and probably from all sections of Bernese territory except the Emmental by the end of the century. The movement, which at times appeared as though it might become a mass movement, was contained and turned back. Yet one may inquire why the efficient Bernese government had to carry on such a protracted struggle to eradicate the Anabaptists and why it failed to purge the movement from the Emmental.

One can not explain it primarily on the basis of the mountainous terrain of the canton, which afforded ample places of refuge for the harried Anabaptists. The Anabaptists had been eliminated from the equally formidable terrain of the Tyrol. One cannot explain it on the basis that the Bernese Anabaptists had a fiercer tenacity than their brethren in other areas. The difficulties of the Bernese government are not to be attributed to the want of resourcefulness, diligence, and strength of that government. The authorities possessed these qualities. Bern ruled with a firm hand.

One explanation for Bern's failure to eliminate the Anabaptists completely was that Bern lacked a forceful personality at the head of the Reformation movement. Berchtold Haller, although a good friend and follower of Zwingli, was too sensitive and cautious a man to demand and force through a bold policy.

It can perhaps be argued that the very rigor of Bernese administration weakened its effectiveness. The severity of the punishment aroused for the Anabaptists the sympathetic support of their neighbors. This suggests then that a fundamental circumstance permitting the perseverance of the Anabaptists was the rural-urban tension in the territory of Bern. This tension expressed itself in the open and also secret non-cooperation of the country folk with the edicts of the central government. The Landvogt and the state church pastor were "government men" and usually not indigenous to the locality. The Anabaptist movement commended itself to those outside the brotherhood. Neighbors helped to hide and protect the Anabaptists and to deflect the sharp blade of persecution.

Despite the efficiency of the centralist, authoritarian Bernese government, the policy of containment and suppression perhaps failed of complete victory because rigorous programs were periodically allowed to lapse in favor of moderate treatment. The Anabaptist movement could probably have been destroyed had the Bernese government pursued the dissenters with a sustained reign of terror until the last of the faithful was exterminated. Bern lacked the elemental ruthlessness to execute such a policy.

# CHAPTER VIII

## BASEL

Basel was not a prominent organizing center of Anabaptism like Zurich, Strassburg, or Augsburg. The movement here did not have the profound political reverberations as in Zurich. Anabaptism in Basel merits study, however, because there was a long and involved encounter between the movement and the government. This encounter is well documented. Basel responded less promptly and less decisively, but perhaps in the long run no less effectively, than other cantonal governments to the challenge of dissent. Not until after the city declared itself for the Reformation in 1529 did the council act decisively against the movement. It is worthy of note that Anabaptism never took deep root in this city rich in commerce and humanist culture. It found, however, an enthusiastic response among the people of the countryside where it enjoyed almost four years of growth with little governmental interference.

Basel distinguished herself in the ~~arts~~ of commerce and industry. The city was famed for its flourishing paper industry and its many printing firms. Here were the renowned publishers, Johann Froben, Adam Petri, Andreas Cratander, and Valentin Curio.[1] Basel served as the chief commercial entrance into Switzerland. In Venice the route over the St. Gotthard was known simply as the "Basel street."[2] Basel had strong economic ties with the cities and regions of the Rhine valley. Basel merchants handled the salt of Lorraine, the wine of Alsace, the grain of the Breisgau for the markets of Switzerland.[3] As a commercial town Basel desired peace to permit the uninhibited activity of her merchants. She cherished her independence.

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[1] Rudolf Wackernagel, Humanismus und Reformation in Basel, Vol. III of Geschichte der Stadt Basel (Basel: Helbing und Lichtenhahn, 1924), pp. 166-85, 439-45.

[2] Oechsli, History of Switzerland, p. 15.

[3] Wackernagel, op. cit., p. 6.

Basel was compelled by events, however, to forsake her independence. When the Swabian war broke out in 1499 Basel remained neutral, thus incurring the hostility of many of her German neighbors. The Peace of Basel on September 22, 1499, established the de facto if not de jure separation of Switzerland from the Empire.[1] Austrian officials and nobility in South Germany harassed Basel's citizens and commerce. Basel had to decide whether she stood with the Empire or with the Confederation. For reasons of self-preservation she joined the Confederation on June 9, 1501.[2] Although a member of the Confederation, Basel was for a long time mistrustful of all but a minimum involvement in Confederation commitments which might jeopardize her political and commercial independence.[3]

Basel and Chur were the only cities of German-speaking Switzerland which were the seats of bishops. The Basel bishopric comprised the northwest corner of present day Switzerland, together with the Sundgau in Alsace.[4] The Bishop of Basel was nominal overlord of the town and territory of Basel and actual ruler of the present Bernese Jura. Beginning in 1501 the town became increasingly estranged from the bishop so that by 1523 he permanently removed his see to Porrentruy to the southwest.[5] Meanwhile, the city council was becoming ever more conscious of itself as a Christian instrument ordained to be the moral arbiter of the community and the supervisor of the affairs of the church.[6] The council sought in May or June 1523 to keep the scales equally balanced between the Catholic and the Reform parties, permitting the "free preaching of the Word of God," but forbidding the mention of Luther and banning any changes in ritual.[1] Above all the council wished to preserve the civil peace.[2]

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[1] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 297.

[2] Ibid., p. 298.

[3] Wackernagel, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

[4] Oechsli, History of Switzerland, p. 64.

[5] Ibid., p. 99.

[6] Cf. Ernst Staehelin (ed.), Das Buch der Basler Reformation (Basel: Helbing und Lichtenhahn, 1929), p. 56; for statutes of 1503 governing the clergy see John Vincent, Switzerland at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century, Series XXII, No. 5 of Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1904), Appendix II, pp. 55-58.

The wealthiest merchant guilds ruled Basel. Basel had both a Small and a Great Council. The actual seat of authority was the Small Council of forty-two members where the richest merchant guilds (called the "Hohen Stube") dictated policy.[3] A democratization of the constitution was forced upon the councils in 1521 through the efforts of the rank and file of the guilds, but nonetheless the city continued to be ruled by a self-perpetuating guild oligarchy.[4] The Basel magistracy was urban minded. Although the city had acquired land by purchase during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, it had difficulty retaining the loyalty of the rural districts.

The ideas of the Reformation were planted early in Basel. Johannes Froben reported to Luther early in 1519 that the Reformer's writings were being printed in great quantities in Basel and distributed to all lands.[5] In 1520 and again in 1522 the city council turned a deaf ear to the demands of the Swiss Diet to burn all Lutheran books and suppress their publication.[6] Basel wanted no diminution in her thriving printing industry. Wolfgang Capito and Kaspar Hedio, both later to be Reformers in Strassburg, were preaching evangelical doctrine in the city in 1520.[1] Throngs of people--at times as many as four thousand--came to hear the evangelical preaching of an eloquent parish priest who later turned Anabaptist, Wilhelm Reublin.[2] At the insistence of the Catholic authorities Reublin was banished from the city in June 1522.[3] Johannes Oecolampadius, who was destined to be the leader of the Reformation in Basel, arrived in the city on November 17, 1522.[4] He came to the city to live quietly as a humanist scholar in the service of the printer Cratander. Soon, however, he was drawn into the Reformation struggle as an instructor in the university and as a pastor of the church of St. Martin. He did not possess the aggressive, confident powers of leadership of a Zwingli, who gave a compelling urgency to the Reformation in Zurich.[5] Oecolampadius, who was a more tranquil spirit, nonetheless gave Basel resolute leadership in the affairs of the church.

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[1] Emil Dürr and Paul Roth (eds.), Aktensammlung zur Geschichte der Basler Reformation in den Jahren 1519 bis Anfang 1534 (Basel: Historischen und Antiquarischen Gesellschaft, 1921-50), Vol. I, No. 151 (hereafter cited as Akt. Basel).

[2] Paul Roth, "Die Vorbereitungsjahre (1525-1528)," Part I of Die Reformation in Basel (Basel: Helbing und Lichtenhahn, 1936), p. 9.

[3] Von Muralt, "Stadtgemeinde und Reformation in der Schweiz," op. cit., p. 357.

[4] Wackernagel, op. cit., pp. 311-12.

[5] Froben to Luther, Basel, February 14, 1519, Staehelin, op. cit., No. 8.

[6] Akt. Basel, Vol. II, Nos. 57, 124.

Vigorous support for the Reformation cause came from the guild membership, notably the weavers.[6] The clerical appointees of the council, like Oecolampadius, were striving for a Reformation. Arrayed against the rising tide of the Reformation were the wealthy merchants, the declining nobility, the university, the cloisters, and the cathedral chapter. The merchant oligarchy feared that if the obedience of the common man to the traditional church were disturbed, the obedience of the citizen to the state might then be undermined.[7] As creditors to the bishop and the Roman Catholic Church, the rich merchants were reluctant to undermine the Church.[1] Aware of the mounting Reformation sentiment, the council sought desperately to find a compromise. The council released on September 23, 1527, an edict of toleration which acknowledged that no one was compelled to attend mass and which permitted three churches in Basel to follow a Reformed order of service.[2] This patchwork device satisfied no one. Zurich had had its Reformation in 1525. Almost a year had passed after Bern had introduced the Reformation and there was still no action. The Reformation-minded guild members grew impatient at these dilatory tactics. On Christmas Day of 1528 the guilds demanded that the new faith alone be authorized.[3] The council begged for time to deliberate. Early on February 8, 1529, a throng of angry citizens met in the Church of the Barefooted Friars to formulate their demands for electoral reforms and the inauguration of the Reformation. An armed citizenry assembled outside the city hall while the council deliberated.[4] Finally the council acceded on the evening of February 9 to the demands of the guilds. The oligarchical system of government continued to prevail, but the citizens obtained their major goal: a Reformation of the church. On April 1, 1529, the council promulgated the ordinance for the Reformation.[5] The humanists Erasmus and Glareanus, the Catholic professors of the university, and the members of the cathedral chapter removed themselves to Freiburg-im-Breisgau.[6]

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[1] Egli, Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte, I, 150-52; cf. excerpts from seven letters, Hedio to Zwingli, Basel, November 6, 1519, to June 10, 1520, in Staehlin, op. cit., No. 10.

[2] Johann Gross, Basler Chronik, cited by Geiser, Die Taufgesinnten Gemeinden, pp. 153-54.

[3] Egli, Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte, I, 157.

[4] Ibid., p. 159.

[5] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 381.

[6] For a statement by the guild of weavers urging the council to introduce the Reformation see Akt. Basel, Vol. I, No. 316.

[7] Von Muralt, "Stadtgemeinde und Reformation . . . ," op. cit., p. 363.

## Anabaptism in Basel before the Reformation of 1529

Anabaptism in Basel was a foreign importation, a movement deriving principally from Zurich. Few residents of the city of Basel appear to have identified themselves with the Anabaptists. The names appearing in the city records are predominantly those from other cities and regions. In contrast the movement in the rural districts was widespread and composed largely of indigenous people.

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[1] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 382.

[2] Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 728.

[3] Geschichte der Schweiz, I, 383.

[4] Wackernagel, op. cit., pp. 521-23.

[5] Akt. Basel, Vol. III, No. 473.

[6] Oechsli, History of Switzerland, p. 108.

Some who were later to be leading Anabaptists resided in Basel during the early 1520's. Among these were Wilhelm Reublin, Andreas Castelberger, Hans Denck, Conrad Grebel.[1] Felix Manz visited Basel in 1524 for the purpose of trying to get either the printer Hans Welsch or Thomas Wolf to publish several works of Carlstadt.[2] The first evidence, however, of an organized movement in Basel was in August 1525 when the authorities surprised a small group of Anabaptists who had been meeting daily in the house of a tailor from Fribourg, Michael Schürer.[3] Among those imprisoned were Laurenz Hochrütiner, a weaver who was a refugee from St. Gall; Ulrich Hugwald, a humanist scholar from Thurgau who was currently employed by the printer Adam Petri; Matthias Graf, a local printer; five women, including Elsi Müller from Ulm. On August 16, 1525, the sentences were handed down by the councils meeting in combined session, including the old and new members of the Small Council and the Great Council. Hugwald and Elsi Müller were released from prison after taking an oath that they would frequent no more clandestine meetings (Winkelversammlungen). They were warned to avoid "subversive, unchristian innovations" and were urged to remain loyal to the "traditional Christian customs and laws." Hochrütiner, Schürer, Graf and his wife were banished. The council warned that the women would be drowned and the men beheaded without trial if any should disobey the conditions of their sentences.

Oecolampadius was surprised to discover the presence of an Anabaptist circle in Basel. He hastened to invite the leaders to a disputation in the parsonage of St. Martin's Church. This discussion, held during the month of August, was attended by threeother Basel clergymen. Oecolampadius subsequently published a not impartial account of the disputation: "A Disputation Held between Several Clergymen of Basel and Several Proponents of Anabaptism."[1] The discussion centered primarily on the question of infant baptism and separation from the established church. The burden of Oecolampadius' argument was that Anabaptists were deficient in love for the Christian community. They created division and unrest. Both sides professed to have triumphed in the disputation. Oecolampadius' partisan account prompted Balthasar Hubmaier to write a response in dialogue form, "A Discussion Concerning Infant Baptism between the Clergymen at Basel and Balthasar Hubmaier," a treatise published two years later in Moravia.[2]

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[1] Paul Burckhardt, Die Basler Täufer (Basel: R. Reich, 1898), p. 7.

[2] Akt. Basel, Vol. I, No. 307.

[3] Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 46.

The Anabaptist movement had been growing vigorously in the city and countryside of Basel and in the territory of the prince-bishop. Noting these developments, the council sent orders on May 17, 1526, to the communities of Therwil, Oberwil, and Reinach to apprehend all "strange preachers" and send them to Basel for examination.[3] On June 2, 1526, the council issued the first mandate against the Anabaptists.[4] The mandate stated: "Whoever is rebaptized shall, with his wife and children, be banished from the city, including a five mile area around the city. No one shall give them any aid or protection." This was followed up with a second mandate on July 24, 1526, which named a number of villages in the vicinity of Basel where Anabaptists had been meeting.[5] In one of the towns, Therwil, the aged priest had been freely giving the Anabaptists shelter and aid.[1] The council ordered that these "sectarian, mob-like" meetings led by unordained pastors must be halted under threat of the severest penalties. Attached to this mandate were three other items of legislation, one of them reporting that some citizens were refusing to do military service. The council ordered that fines of ten pounds should be levied on each of these war resisters.[2] The mandate does not state explicitly that the opponents to military service were Anabaptists, but the juxtaposition of the two pieces of legislation seems to suggest this. On the same day that the mandate was issued two Anabaptists, Laurenz Hochrütiner and Michael Schürer, received their sentences from the combined councils.[3] These two had been banished the year before with the warning that they would be beheaded should they return. They did return, but the councils were in no mood as yet to execute Anabaptists so they ordered the pair again into exile, forbidding them under penalty of death to return to Basel or the ten mile area surrounding the city. Recognizing that many exiled Anabaptists illegally returned from banishment to see their families, the councils specifically ordered that the wives and children of these two men should also be sent into exile within eight days.

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[1] Johannes Oecolampadius, *Ain Gespräch etlicher Predicanten zu Basel gehalten mit etlichen Bekennern des Wydertauffs* (Basel, 1525); *Briefe und Akten zum Leben Oekolampads*, ed. Ernst Staehlin, Vols. X and XIX, *Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte* (Leipzig: M. Heinsius Nachfolger Eger und Sievers, 1927 and 1934), I, No. 273 (hereafter cited as *Akt. Oek.*).

[2] Balthasar Hubmaier, *Ein gesprech der Predicanten zu Basel und Balthasaren Huebmörs von Fridberg von dem Khindertauff* (Nicolspurg, 1527); for an extract in English from this dialogue see John Horsch, *Infant Baptism* (Scottdale, Pa., 1917), pp. 104-9.

[3] *Akt. Basel*, Vol. II, No. 386.

[4] *Akt. Basel*, Vol. II, No. 408.

[5] *Akt. Basel*, Vol. II, No. 454, p. 366.

The magistracy enforced only the provisions of the mandates pertaining to banishment. The court records are filled with numerous accounts of Anabaptists being exiled, returning illegally, and then again being exiled. Before 1530 the frequent warnings of drowning or beheading were only empty threats. Basel preferred to rid herself of the troublous Anabaptists by banishing them to the territories of her neighbors. Before the mandate of 1528 Anabaptists appear not to have been punished physically or with fines. Imprisonments were of brief duration. This indicates that in these early years incarceration was not so much a technique of punishment as it was a means of holding the

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[1] Burckhardt, _op. cit._, p. 24.

[2] _Akt. Basel_, Vol. II, No. 454, pp. 366-67.

[3] _Akt. Basel_, Vol. II, No. 455.

Anabaptists while they were being interrogated or awaiting trial. The Anabaptists derived some freedom from the fact that the religious situation in the city was confused. Catholic-minded officials made little distinction between the Anabaptists and the Lutherans or Zwinglians. To the good Catholic they were all "sectarians." As an example, Gabriel Schumacher was imprisoned and banished because of his "Lutheran way of life," but it is recorded that he refused the oath on grounds of conscience--indicative that he probably was an Anabaptist.[1] In April 1527 Oecolampadius forwarded to Zwingli a copy of the Schleitheim Confession of Faith which he had received from a rural pastor.[2] In conjunction with this he remarked that the Basel council was too lukewarm in its prosecution of the Anabaptists.[3] He attributed this policy of quasi-toleration to the Catholic party on the council, who, he said, wished through the Anabaptists to cast disrespect on the cause of the Reformation. In this political setting of religious diversity, moderation and indifference, the Anabaptists multiplied continuously throughout the years from 1526 to 1529.

Meanwhile Anabaptist missionaries from foreign parts came and went in a continuous stream. Some were apprehended and banished. Among these was Friedli Iberger from Schwyz,[4] who had escaped from the Hexenturm in Zurich and was an active evangelist; Rudolf Forster, a tailor from Zurich; Ulrich Bolt, a former priest from Zurich;[5] and many others. On the whole these itinerant apostles seemed to have suffered only a minimum of persecution and inconvenience from the government. Hans Pfistermeyer from Aarau frequently visited Basel without experiencing any more severe treatment than repeated banishment.[6]

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[1] Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 479.

[2] Oecolampadius to Johann Grel, Basel, March 15, 1527, Akt. Oek., II, No. 472.

[3] Oecolampadius to Zwingli, Basel, April 24, 1527, ZW, Vol. IX, No. 607.

[4] Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 439.

[5] Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 397.

[6] Burckhardt, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

In 1526 after the promulgation of the first two mandates, Pfistermeyer went personally to the evangelical-minded burgomaster, Adelberg Meyer, and asked why the city was exiling the Anabaptists.[1] The burgomaster in a long friendly conversation explained to him the laws pertaining to the Anabaptists. He offered Pfistermeyer permission to remain in Basel providing he would neither conduct nor attend any Anabaptist meetings. Pfistermeyer answered that he could make no such promise. After his exile from Zurich in 1526, Felix Manz came to Basel to evangelize especially in the countryside.[2] As one city banished its Anabaptists, they soon became the problem of other cities. Oecolampadius reported in January 1527 that many Anabaptists who had recently been exiled from Strassburg were arriving in Basel.[3] Among these were Anabaptist apostles from Augsburg, Lindau, and Montbeliard, who came to pursue missionary activities in the Basel area.[4]

In the city the Anabaptists met quietly in a number of different private homes. A frequent place of meeting was, for example, the home of Hans Altenbach, a wool weaver from Lucerne who had been a subprior of a monastery.[5] These small clandestine congregations consisted of nuclei of firmly convinced brethren from foreign parts together with local people who were of more transient commitment and therefore less steadfast under government pressure.[6] The strength of the Anabaptist movement after 1526 lay in the Basel countryside. Here the centers were Therwil and the adjacent villages in the territory of the bishop and the towns of Liestal and Lausen in the Canton of Basel.[7]

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[1] Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, No. 288. [2] Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 17.

[3] Oecolampadius to Zwingli, Basel, January 15, 1527, ZW, Vol. IX, No. 576.

[4] Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 654, p. 486.

[5] Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 654, pp. 484, 485.

[6] Cf. Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 654, pp. 483-86.

[7] Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 32.

Frequently the Anabaptists from town and countryside met in fields and forests near Basel at locations secretly agreed upon.

A certain Anabaptist, called "Karlin N." or "Charlie from Zurich,"[1] while being held prisoner in Basel, boldly petitioned the city council in June 1527 for permission to defend four theses before both the Catholic and the Reformation theologians. The council agreed to the request and called for all three parties to appear in the city hall--the date probably being June 25, 1527. The Catholic and Reformed theologians participated reluctantly. Apparently the Anabaptist, Karlin, was invited on this occasion to present his four articles of faith, whereupon the council ordered the other two parties each to submit within four days a written refutation of these Anabaptist principles.[2] Karlin's four theses were the following: (1) Infant baptism is an abomination before God and a form of idolatry. (2) The magistracy is established of God. If the magistracy, however, does not proceed according to the command and injunction of God, it is not divinely ordained and one is not required then to be obedient to it. Enlarging on his view of the magistracy, Karlin stated that the power of Pilate was derived from God. However, the magistracy cannot be spoken of as "Christian," for Christ's Kingdom is not of this world. Christians cannot serve in the magistracy. Christ himself refused the offer of kingship and declined to judge between disputants in civil controversies. Moreover, Christians do not assume responsibility for regulating the lives of those who stand outside the faith. Only those of the brotherhood are disciplined with the ban. (3) The swearing of oaths is not right and is forbidden. That which is beyond a "Yes" and a "No" is deceit. (4) He who teaches and does other than what Christ taught is a tempter. After this disputation Karlin disappears from the records of the city.

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[1] Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 654, p. 485.

[2] A copy of Karlin's four articles, preserved among the criminal records of Basel, is published in Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 676.

Within several days of this public disputation the council received long critical commentaries on Karlin's theses from the other two factions. Augustinus Marius, answering for the Catholics,[1] argued that there was little difference between Karlin (ein widerteuffer) and Oecolampadius (ein freyteuffer). The spokesman for the evangelicals was Oecolampadius.[2] He admitted the argument of Karlin that the office of the magistrate was beset with grave moral dangers, but it also had, he insisted, its particular rewards in the Christian order. The magistracy was one of the several Christian callings. No one, he stated, was more qualified to rule than a Christian, because he loves truth and righteousness, fears God, and refuses to accept pensions and bribes. The Christian serves as a magistrate in response to love for his neighbors. With regard to the magistrate's duty to levy the death sentence and wage war--both highly objectionable to the Anabaptists--Oecolampadius explained that the Christian magistrate pursues these functions no further than to achieve the salvation of his subjects. The magistracy is throughout a Christian enterprise.[3] The oath, Oecolampadius explained, serves the salvation of the soul, the honor of God, and the public peace. He added that what Christ said concerning the oath had nothing to do with external forms but pertained to the simplicity and honesty of the inner heart.[4]

This scholarly exchange of opinions served well the purpose of the council because it provided theological justification for the punishment of Anabaptist dissent. Within a week of this disputation-in-writing the council issued a new mandate against the Anabaptists. In this mandate of July 6, 1527, all Anabaptist meetings were prohibited "either in or near the city, in forests, or fields" and all hedge-preaching by unordained preachers was banned.[1] All who refused to bring their children for baptism, attended Anabaptist meetings, offered refuge or assistance to Anabaptists were threatened with severe punishment against "body and property." The exact penalties remained unspecified. The council justified its action on the grounds of serving in the community the ends of Christian love, peace, and unity. Further, it was argued that this sectarianism created disobedience and contempt for the magistracy.

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[1] The statement submitted by Augustinus Marius appears in Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 678, pp. 579-611.

[2] The statement submitted by Oecolampadius appears in Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 677, pp. 547-579.

[3] Akt. Basel, Vol. II, pp. 565-71.

[4] Akt. Basel, Vol. II, pp. 571-77.

Five Anabaptists from Liestal were summoned before the Basel authorities on July 16, 1527, where they declared under oath that they would dissociate themselves completely from the movement.[2] It must have been disturbing to the magistracy to observe that among these five men was one Heini Soder, a confessed ringleader in the local peasant's revolt of 1525.[3] A fear that Anabaptism might be linked together with peasant discontent may have been the factor prompting the council to issue a new mandate two weeks later. This mandate of August 3, 1527, was directed against the "Anabaptists and all those who refuse the oath."[4] It reaffirmed the provisions of the mandate of June 1526 and promised that the Anabaptists would be punished most severly, not only in "body and property," but also with "loss of life."

Basel sent one delegate to the conference at Zurich in August 1527 which met to consider common procedures for halting the Anabaptist movement.[5] Basel refused to subscribe to the harshly worded concordat which Zurich, Bern, and St. Gall signed. This was in keeping with her traditional detachment from "entangling alliances." Basel, who admitted to Anabaptist troubles, explained to Zurich that she was not particopating jointly with the other cantons because she had promulgated only recently her own mandate which she hoped would answer the problem.[1] The Basel council did not want the concordat printed, probably because it seemed too obviously a product of the evangelical party. Basel was still pursuing the middle-way.

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[1] Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 681.

[2] Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 387.

[3] Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 380.

[4] Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 702.

[5] The Basel delegate submitted to his council a copy of the conference report which is published in Akt. Basel, Vol. II, No. 707.

Early in October 1527 Oecolampadius received a letter from Hans Denck, who begged that he be granted asylum in Basel.[2] Denck, then broken in health and disheartened about Anabaptism, had been expelled from a number of cities, most recently Augsburg and Ulm. Oecolampadius, who had been his teacher and colleague in humanist studies, opened his home to him. It is not known whether the council had authorized this grant of hospitality to the arch-dissenter.[3] While a house guest of Oecolampadius, Denck was asked by his host to write a statement of his faith. Two years after Denck's death this brief confession was published in Mainz under the misleading title, "Hans Denck's Retraction."[4] This confession reveals that Denck, without disavowing all his Anabaptist principles, had become essentially a spiritualist. He reaffirmed in this writing his belief in religious liberty, a conviction common to Anabaptist and spiritualist alike:

> Wheresoever there are hearts that cherish this good work of God through Christ and follow in His steps, I rejoice over them and love them. . . , but as to those who do not wish to hear me and still cannot keep quiet about the things in which we differ, I cannot have much fellowship with them, for I do not feel the mind of Christ in such, but a perverted mind which tries to drive me by force from my own faith and compel me to accept his. . . . In matters of faith everything should be voluntary and uncompelled. . . . Persecution and other such fear has separated me from others, but my heart is not turned away from them nor from any God-fearing soul. . . . So I do not wish to justify myself, but know and recognize full well that I am a human being who has erred and may yet err.[5]

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[1] Akt. Basel, Vol. II, Nos. 720, 721.

[2] Denck to Oecolampadius, October 1527, Akt. Oek., Vol. II, No. 523.

[3] Ernst Staehelin, Das Theologische Lebenswerk Johannes Oekolampads, Vol. XXI of Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte (Leipzig: M. Heinsius Nachfolger, 1939), p. 393.

[4] Akt. Oek., Vol. II, No. 613, p. 251.

[5] From Hans Denck's "Widerruf" reprinted in Adolf M. Schwindt, Hans Denck, ein Vorkämpfer undogmatischen Christentums, 1495-1527 (Habertshof, Bavaria: Neuwerkverlag Schlüchtern, [1924]), pp. 59-60.

A few weeks after writing this statement--sometime during November 1527--Denck died from the plague in Basel.[1]

During the year 1528 the movement was virtually eliminated from the city of Basel, while at the same time the Anabaptists multiplied rapidly in the rural districts. Early in the year the city received a copy of Charles V's imperial mandate, dated January 4, 1528, which demanded the death penalty for Anabaptists.[2] This appears to be the only instance in which Basel received a communication from imperial authorities concerning the Anabaptists. Although the city was in frequent communication with the Austrian officials in Alsace and the Breisgau, no instance has been found in which Basel acknowledged imperial law or precedents in her treatment of the Anabaptists. Observing no diminution in the movement, the council issued its fifth mandate on March 14, 1528, which was more definitive than previous legislation in the specification of penalties.[3] The provisions included the following: (1) all Anabaptists who would not "forsake their errors" were to be immediately imprisoned and then severely punished; (2) those who gave them lodging should in every instance pay a fine of five pounds; (3) anyone found attending an Anabaptist meeting was to be fined one pound. The council ordered that this mandate should be publicly announced in every section of the city and countryside.

The authorities worked energetically throughout the summer months of 1528 in cleansing the city of all Anabaptists. The leaders were singled out for punishment. Hans Seckler, Jacob Treier, and Conrad Winkler were placed in neck irons, beaten with rods, and banished.[4] During the year beginning in May 1528 the council had at least ten encounters with Conrad Winkler, a Zurich Anabaptist who returned repeatedly despite the council's gravest threats and his own most solemn promises which he sometimes gave under oath.[1] At one hearing Winkler declared that banishment was not binding on him because the "earth was the Lord's."[2] The eloquent Georg Blaurock and a number of Anabaptists from Etschland in the Tyrol who arrived in the city in 1528 were imprisoned and then banished.[3] Not all, however, were exiled. The government freed from prison five women from Liestal who, although they refused to take an oath, promised to avoid Anabaptist meetings.[4] Throughout the summer of 1528 the council appropriated money almost weekly for the maintenance of imprisoned Anabaptists awaiting trial. Some were required to pay their own maintenance costs while in prison.[5] Judging solely on the basis of the weekly records of expenditure for prisoner upkeep, it would appear that in the years from 1528 through 1531 the great majority of prisoners were Anabaptists.

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[1] Akt. Oek., Vol. II, p. 105.

[2] Akt. Basel, Vol. III, No. 6.

[3] Akt. Basel, Vol. III, No. 67.

[4] Akt. Basel, Vol. III, Nos. 149, 151.

Anabaptism as an organized movement had been eliminated from the city by the eve of the Basel Reformation. Virtually destroyed in the city, the movement nonetheless flourished with little interference in the countryside. It gained a firm foothold in the upland regions to the southeast.[6] The town of Läufelfingen, for example, was said by a contemporary to have been "completely seized and poisoned with the Anabaptist sect."[7] In the rural areas they met in field, forests, farm homes, and at Therwil in a brewer's cellar. Such developments came to the ears of Oecolampadius who reported to Zwingli: "Recently more than one hundred Anabaptists were together in the nearby countryside."[1]

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[1] Akt. Basel, Vol. III, Nos. 136, 138, 151, 152, 169, 186, 187, 196, 555, 575.

[2] Akt. Basel, Vol. III, No. 186.

[3] Akt. Basel, Vol. III, No. 392.

[4] Akt. Basel, Vol. III, No. 176.

[5] Cf. Akt. Basel, Vol. III, Nos. 139, 184, 185a, 456, 485, 519.

[6] Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 27.

[7] Geiser, Die Taufgesinnten Gemeinden, p. 159.

Prior to the Basel Reformation the Anabaptists were subjected to vexing restrictions and were exiled with alacrity, but it cannot be said that they were severly and systematically persecuted. The council had accomplished before 1529 the not-so-difficult task of eliminating the movement from the narrow confines of the city. Strengthened after 1529 by a unified religious and political purpose, the council developed a program of more severe laws and stricter enforcement which crushed Anabaptism even in the rural districts.

## Anabaptism in Basel after the Reformation of 1529

Basel became a Reformed community on February 9, 1529. This Reformation was affected primarily by urban forces based on strong guild support. The rural people had no part in establishing the new order and had little enthusiasm for it.[2] The Reformed magistracy sought to consolidate its political and ecclesiastical gains after the events of February. It felt compelled to protect itself from possible opponents to the right and to the left. Any subjects who did not yield the state full support were feared to be dangerous. The council eyed anxiously the small tradesman element in the community which was dissatisfied with the Reformation because it had not brought a democratization of the constitution as had been originally hoped. The political plotting of the artisans was publicly exposed in May 1529.[3] Although this urban discontent had no relation to the Anabaptist movement, the council was fearful that the two were interrelated.[4] One of the early acts of the Reformed magistracy was to issue an edict on February 23, 1529, to all Landvögte that the mandate of March 13, 1528, was still operative and should be rigorously enforced.[1] Within a few weeks seventeen Anabaptists from the village of Ettingen were apprehended and imprisoned.[2]

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[1] Oecolampadius to Zwingli, Basel, July 3, 1528, ZW, Vol. IX, No. 733.

[2] Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 29.

[3] Akt. Basel, Vol. III, Nos. 548, 596, 597.

[4] Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 30.

The Small and Great Councils laid down the constitutional foundation for the Reformation in Basel in an ordinance promulgated on April 1, 1529.[3] The extensive twenty-second article was devoted primarily to the problem of Anabaptism.[4] The council asserted that those who abused the sacrament of infant baptism obstructed Christian love and freedom. The Anabaptists were "factious spirits who in foolish madness contradicted the truth of Holy Scripture." They assembled in woods, fields, and private houses. Then followed the penal provisions: (1) all who accepted this seditious teaching, as well as all those who gave the Anabaptists shelter or attended their meetings, were to be imprisoned and maintained on gruel and bread (Mus und Brot) until they recanted; (2) permission was given to torture in order to obtain recantations; (3) those who swore a recantation and conformed to the established usage were to be released from prison and recognized again as Christian brethren; (4) those who remained obstinately entrenched in their errors were to be held in prison until they died; (5) if any returned to Anabaptism after their oath of recantation, they were to be held as "infamous, perjurious people" and "seditious Christians" and therefore subject to execution by the sword without trial. The council warned that these severe punishments applied also to those who sympathized with the Anabaptists and attended their meetings, but were not rebaptized. The records bear evidence that during the spring of 1529 the authorities were busy arresting and punishing Anabaptists. The records are silent, however, concerning such activity during the time from June to December 1529--the period when Basel was engaged in the First Kappel War. Two Anabaptists from the countryside are known to have refused military service as Basel mobilized eight hundred infantrymen for this war.[1]

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[1] Akt. Basel, Vol. III, No. 406. [2] Akt. Basel, Vol. III, No. 467.

[3] Akt. Basel, Vol. III, No. 473.

[4] Akt. Basel, Vol. III, pp. 401-2.

The war over, the council began in earnest in December 1529 to destroy the movement throughout the breadth of the canton. On December 29 the council dispatched instructions to all *Landvögte* to be vigilant to seize all Anabaptists, especially the leaders, who should then be punished locally.[2] The council asked that no additional Anabaptists should be sent to Basel until the prisoners then being held there could be brought to trial, as the prison was already overfilled. The officials were ordered to guard carefully day and night their local prisons. Finally, the *Landvögte* were told to admonish village clergymen to be attentive to the Anabaptist danger.

On the same day that instructions were sent to the *Landvögte*, December 29, a disputation was held in the city hall under the auspices of the city council.[3] Hans Hersberger, a miller from the town of Läufelfingen, was the principal spokesman for the eleven Anabaptists who attended. Also present were all the city's clergy. Johann Gast, a clergyman who attended the debate, recorded that there were sharp encounters between the Anabaptists and the authorities.[4] The Supreme Guild Master, Marx Heidelin, is said to have addressed one of the Anabaptists as "brother," who then replied: "I do not recognize you as a brother." "What is that?" asked the startled magistrate. The Anabaptist continued: "You are no Christian, confess your sins, and relinquish your office of magistrate." Another is reported to have cried out passionately to the councilmen: "Earlier I was wicked and was left unpunished. Now that I have been baptized on confession of my sins, I am persecuted. You have thrown me into prison as though I were a thief. What have I done wrong?"

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[1] Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

[2] *Akt. Basel*, Vol. IV, No. 277.

[3] *Akt. Basel*, Vol. IV, No. 301.

[4] Johannes Gast, *De anabaptismi exordio, erroribus, historiis abominandis, confutationibus adiectis libri duo* (Basel: Robert Winter, 1544). Substantial excerpts from Gast's account are reproduced in *Akt. Oek.*, Vol. II, No. 991, pp. 789-800.

Obviously the council resented such blunt criticism. The council sent a formal report of the disputation to the officials at Solothurn in which it declared that Anabaptism was a "dogmatic, pharisaical sham" which "prized itself, damned everything else, and finally led to a marked disobedience and rebelliousness."[1] The council reported further:

> They held that their ruler is Christ and that the Christian cannot be a magistrate. They said that the magistracy may not employ the sword to revenge the evil deed, neither against the seducer, the blasphemer, or the murderer. [They said that the magistracy should not use the sword] to protect its subjects, the widows and orphans, and the fatherland. In the pursuance of such duties, which we hold to be Christian, the Anabaptists declared that they are not required to be obedient to the magistrates.[2]

They also taught, it was said, that no Christian should swear an oath for the magistracy. Four Anabaptists recanted their views at the end of the disputation,[3] but the other seven remained steadfast.

The council was displeased with the fact that so many Anabaptists, who under solemn oath recanted their views and pledged themselves to maintain the peace, soon perjured themselves by returning to their former ways. The legal procedure was to release no one from prison and send no one into exile without receiving from that person a solemn promise or oath to observe the terms of the sentence. Apparently word had returned to the council that the rural people felt these oaths were not binding because they were made under duress. To offset this general impression, the council instructed its secretary, Heinrich Ryhiner, to draft a formal oath of recantation (Urfehde) which each abjurer of Anabaptism would thereafter be required to read publicly before the council and in his village church before the whole community.[4] This Urfehde of some seven hundred words was written in the spirit of a religious confession in which the reformed sinner acknowledged the errors of his past ways, confessed how he had been converted by biblical instruction, pledged obedience in civil and religious affairs, and warned his hearers of the punishments awaiting those who consort with Anabaptists.[1] The ex-Anabaptist was to confess publicly that Anabaptists despised Christian love and freedom, scorned infant baptism, slandered the clergy, rejected the Christian magistracy in its services to the community, and committed many other grievous sins. A paragraph of the Urfehde was devoted to the abjurer's pledge to observe a series of obligations to church and state. He pledged himself to be a "humble and obedient subject of the Christian magistracy in all things commanded of him," to take the oath when required, to pay willingly taxes and other customary obligations, and always to remain loyal. The authorities hoped that this elaborate Urfehde would serve two purposes: (1) it would have propaganda value in discrediting the movement; (2) it would give solid legal basis for the punishment of those who perjured themselves by returning to the Anabaptists. This formalized confession served poorly the first purpose, but afforded a substantial legal rationalization for the policy of persecution.

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[1] Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, No. 301, p. 289.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, Nos. 295, 299.

[4] Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, No. 295.

The council was embittered by its series of encounters with the Anabaptists in December 1529 and in the first days of January 1530. In order to strike fear among the too-confident Anabaptists, it decided to make an example of one of their leaders. The council singled out Hans Ludi.[2] He was of somewhat radical disposition, having been arrested and flogged in 1528 for destroying images in a parish church.[3] On January 12, 1530, he was beheaded in the presence of many witnesses.[4] This execution created among the rural people much sympathy for the Anabaptists. Oecolampadius observed anxiously in a letter to Zwingli: "They who die so fearlessly and appear so blameless are a new peril for us. Those who are not firmly grounded begin to weaken, for their eyes are upon the resoluteness of the Anabaptists rather than principles."[1] Many rural folk respected the Anabaptists as sincere, pious people, who now were being made Christian martyrs. Among those who did not unite with the movement this sympathy expressed itself in a widespread readiness to aid those Anabaptists who suffered from the magistrate's wrath. In addition to this elemental sympathy for the persecuted, rural attitudes were conditioned favorably toward the Anabaptists by other factors. The people of the countryside supported the Anabaptists out of antipathy for the wealthy, commercially-minded magistracy. They also appreciated the Anabaptists for having brought to their rural communities their first knowledge of the Reformation message.[2]

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[1] Copies of earlier and later versions of the Urfehde are to be found in Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, No. 293.

[2] Burckhardt, op. cit., pp. 26, 33, 37.

[3] Akt. Basel, Vol. III, No. 209.

[4] Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, Nos. 313, 324.

Through 1530 the Anabaptist movement was in a vigorous state of life throughout the country districts. Some villages, especially in the districts of Homburg and Farnsburg, were predominantly Anabaptist communities.[3] In February forty Anabaptists from the village of Rothenfluh and eleven from Anwil were seized and taken together to Basel where they were incarcerated in various prisons.[4] It is interesting to note that among the imprisoned Anabaptists were four jurymen, one bailiff, and one Landvogt. All the prisoners were released on February 11, 1530, on the condition that each pay a fine of five pounds. From this time on these two villages were centers of the movement.[5] The Anabaptists at Lostdorf often met in a secluded sandpit where on one occasion a group of sixty women and an equal number of men gathered.[6]

Beginning with the year 1530 the government made more frequent use of torture--flogging, the rack, and "ducking." One Anabaptist, subjected to torture, refused to betray information concerning his brethren and their meetings. "My body is yours," he told the judge, "to be burned, torn to pieces, or dismembered as you will. My soul is free from torment; it is overflooded with joy from an inner consolation which comes from the Lord."[1] He urged the executioner to unite with the brotherhood and there find release from his spiritual burdens. The executioner spit in his face and declared: "Get behind me, you Satan!" The judge released the prisoner without being able to extract a recantation. Hans Madlinger charged in a trial in August 1530 that he had once under oath renounced Anabaptism while suffering the agony of the rack.[2]

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[1] Oecolampadius to Zwingli, Basel, January 15, 1530, ZW, Vol. X, No. 958.

[2] Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 4.

[3] Staehelin, Das Buch der Basler Reformation, p. 224.

[4] Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, No. 348.

[5] Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 38.

[6] Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, No. 364.

After the beheading of Hans Ludi, other Anabaptists were ordered executed. Early in February 1530 Jacob Treier, who had been frequently imprisoned and at least once banished,[3] was sentenced to death.[4] Through his recantation and the intervention of Oecolampadius, Treier was pardoned on condition that he would make a public confession before the assembled council, at the Minster, and at the parish churches of Liestal and Lausen.[5] If he were again to return to Anabaptism, he would be drowned, beheaded, or hung from a tree.[6] No more thereafter is heard of Treier. Similarly orders for the execution of Hans Hersberger and Uli Madlinger were not consumated.[7] In his trial Hersberger declared that as an Anabaptist he could take no oath, attend no state church services, and bear no arms, even if ordered by the magistracy and even if it were in opposition to the Turks.[8] Hersberger took an oath of recantation, which may have been administered under compulsion.[1] Uli Madlinger also recanted and was pardoned.[2] Madlinger was ordered to pay the considerable fine of fifty gulden and Hersberger twenty gulden. In addition they were to pay all court and prison costs. Like Treier they were to make public confessions in the Minster and in their respective village churches. Madlinger and Hersberger were also threatened with death should they disobey their sentences. In less than a year both were again in the hands of the law.

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[1] Gast, op. cit., quoted by Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 122.

[2] Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, No. 610.

[3] Akt. Basel, Vol. III, No. 139.

[4] Gast, op. cit., quoted by Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 37.

[5] Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, No. 355.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 37.

[8] Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, No. 364.

With increasing frequency the council used the church as an instrument for controlling the Anabaptists. In the individual court sentences the ex-Anabaptist was usually required to confess his errors publicly before the congregation in his village and sometimes in the Basel Minster. He was also instructed to attend without fail the services of the parish church. The church was used as an arm of the state. Partially in response to the continuous emphasis of the Anabaptists upon the disciplined church, the Basel clergy and magistracy took steps during the year 1530 to introduce discipline, including the ban, into the church order.[3] Oecolampadius, perhaps the most ardent advocate in Basel of the disciplined church, argued thus in behalf of the ban: "The Papists and the Anabaptists revile us, not without cause, that we are no church, because we have no power of the key and no ban."[4] The city council responded to his recommendation with orders on December 14 and 15, 1530, for the establishment of a form of church discipline in the parishes of the city and countryside.[5] It is difficult to judge how much of a factor this church discipline, incomplete and hesitant as it was, had in checking the further growth of the Anabaptist movement. Oecolampadius was convinced that it was a major factor contributing to the downfall of the Anabaptists.[1]

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[1] Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, No. 365.

[2] Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, No. 356.

[3] Staehelin, Das Theologische Lebenswerk Johannes Oekolampads, pp. 507-27.

[4] Staehelin, Das Buch der Basler Reformation, p. 232.

[5] Akt. Basel, Vol. V. Nos. 76, 77.

The council was dissatisfied with the progress in the fight against Anabaptism. Concluding that the provisions of the Reformation Ordinance of 1529 were not sufficiently rigorous, the council issued a new mandate on November 23, 1530.[2] The council explained in the opening paragraph that action against the Anabaptists and their "rebellious and damnable teaching" was required to protect the "honor of God and the salvation of its subjects." The council charged that the Anabaptists had the following dangerous teachings: (1) that among Christians no magistracy was required; (2) that in event there were a magistracy, this could not be Christian; (3) that the sword should not be used to punish the evildoer. The council stated flatly that in the city and land of Basel no Anabaptist would be tolerated any longer. The new mandate contained the following provisions: (1) all Anabaptists, including their supporters and protectors, should be imprisoned; (2) if they renounced their errors and took an oath of loyalty, they should be pardoned and not banished; (3) those who refused to recant, were to be exiled; (4) those who relapsed into Anabaptism or returned from their banishment, were to be imprisoned again, immersed in water until they almost drowned, and once more banished; (5) if they reappeared they were to be drowned immediately without trial at the nearest convenient place. Absolutely no exceptions were to be granted from the penalties of this law. In the concluding paragraph the council explained that the oath meant nothing to the perjurious Anabaptists. Hence, no oath would be required of them at the time of their banishment. The authorities were simply to read to them the mandate and if they later violated it, they were to be punished forthwith.

The government soon implemented with thoroughness and severity the provisions of the mandate of November 1530. The year 1531 marks, therefore, the culmination followed by the sharp decline of the Anabaptist movement. On January 16, 1531, an Anabaptist was "ducked" for the first time in the Rhine--"immersed three times according to custom."[1] It became a frequent practice to immerse Anabaptists repeatedly until they recanted. Even women were subjected to this torture.[2] A siege of executions began in February 1531. Only two names are given of those who were executed in this wave of persecution: Hans Madlinger and Peter Linggenscher, both imprisoned in the Homburg Castle. The council dispatched to Homburg two councilmen and two clergymen to plead with the group of Anabaptist prisoners, for, said the council, "We desire to shed no one's blood and seek only to secure every man's salvation."[3] Most of the prisoners remained steadfast. Hans Madlinger and an Uli Schmidt were immersed three times in the presence of a sympathetic throng and then ordered into exile. Madlinger, who refused to be banished, and Peter Linggenscher, who had so frequently broken his oath, were drowned on February 10, 1531, in a brook near Homburg Castle.[4] Hans Madlinger's brother, Uli, and a number of others were immersed several times in the icy stream and banished.[5] The Landvogt of the district of Homburg petitioned the city council on March 6, 1531, that if any more of the Anabaptist prisoners at Homburg were to be "ducked" or drowned, such proceedings should be carried out not in the country district but in the city of Basel.[6] He explained that the common people were embittered by these spectacles which they apparently were required to attend. The executions in the country districts continued. At least six times in a ten week period beginning in late February the city financial records contain notations that the executioner, usually accompanied by a gravedigger, was sent into the country districts to execute Anabaptists.[1] The last recorded trip of the executioner was in October 1531.[2] Burckhardt reports that the executioner made at least ten such "trips of death" during 1531.[3] On one occasion the council appropriated seven shillings and four pence to the executioner to buy rope and collars "for ducking Anabaptists."[4] Two councilmen received in March 1531 expense money for torturing Anabaptists on the rack.[5] In the midst of this reign of terror Oecolampadius wrote to Konrad Sohm in Ulm: "The Anabaptists have almost no place of refuge. The church again commands esteem. Gradually the opposition will be eliminated."[6]

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[1] Oecolampadius to Konrad Sohm, Basel, March 29, 1531, Akt. Oek., Vol. II, No. 836.

[2] Akt. Basel, Vol. V, No. 62.

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[1] Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 40.

[2] Akt. Basel, Vol. V, No. 249.

[3] Akt. Basel, Vol. V, No. 124; cf. Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 41.

[4] Akt. Basel, Vol. V, No. 124, p. 110.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Akt. Basel, Vol. V, No. 150.

In 1531 the council first began the systematic use of imprisonment as a means for compelling Anabaptists to renounce their faith. Hans Hersberger and his wife, Barbara, were placed on trial in August 1531 for having returned from exile.[7] They explained that they felt constrained to return out of love for their two children who were at home with no one to care for them. The wife asserted that they would not leave their children and that they were more duty bound by God's laws than man's. She added that they would suffer whatever would come. Neither would disavow their Anabaptism. Both were imprisoned on August 16, 1531.[8] They were not released until December 3, 1533, when they recanted.[9] Broken in health, they were permitted to recuperate in an old cloister for a week before they had to depart for their exile. Anna Gysin died in prison in March 1533 after a year of imprisonment.[10] In May 1532 Sebastian Schmidt was released from prison after a long internment when he promised with a simple affirmation that he would leave the canton and not return from exile.[1]

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[1] Akt. Basel, Vol. V, Nos. 137, 147, 227.

[2] Akt. Basel, Vol. V, No. 454.

[3] Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 42.

[4] Akt. Basel, Vol. V, No. 147.

[5] Akt. Basel, Vol. V, No. 162.

[6] Oecolampadius to Sohm, Basel, March 29, 1531, Akt. Oek., Vol. II, No. 836.

[7] Akt. Basel, Vol. V, No. 390.

[8] Akt. Basel, Vol. V, No. 390, p. 328.

[9] Akt. Basel, Vol. VI, No. 370.

[10] Akt. Basel, Vol. VI, No. 256.

Church and state collaborated closely in the final stages of the struggle against the Anabaptists. Councilmen were sent out with clergymen to rural districts to interview dissenters.[2] In May 1531, at the very time when the persecution policy was most intense, Oecolampadius and a council member were sent by the city council on a visitation journey to the rural parishes.[3] As Oecolampadius spoke from the village pulpits he concentrated his attack on the errors of Anabaptism.[4] In the confession of faith authorized by the city council on January 24, 1534, one section was devoted to the errors of the Anabaptists.[5] These "damnable opinions" were declared to include the belief that infant baptism is not baptism, that in no event may one swear an oath, that the magistrate cannot be a Christian.

After the movement was crushed in 1531 one finds only occasional references to Anabaptists. Two foreign brethren were arrested in 1532 and were interrogated under torture as to what rebellion they were plotting.[6] The two men steadfastly denied any plans of rebellion. The nearby Austrian authorities at Ensisheim in Alsace warned other powers frequently that the Anabaptists were dangerous seditionists. On April 21, 1535, the Basel council assured the Ensisheim authorities that the Anabaptists were under complete control in Basel because many had been executed in the city and countryside.[7] Jacob Hersberger, who had been a conscientious objector in the Second Kappel

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[1] Akt. Basel, Vol. VI, No. 98.

[2] Staehelin, Das Theologische Lebenswerk Johannes Oekolampads, p. 533.

[3] Akt. Basel, Vol. V, No. 241.

[4] Staehelin, Das Theologische Lebenswerk Johannes Oekolampads, pp. 533-34.

[5] Akt. Basel, Vol. VI, No. 400.

[6] Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 46.

[7] Ibid.

War, was seized and placed in neck irons on July 14, 1535. The executioner cut out his tongue and cut off two fingers from his right hand as punishment for being a "perjurious Anabaptist." In 1535 an Anabaptist weaver, Simon Rebmann, was arrested and then released on the condition that he attend services every morning in the Minster and avoid the Anabaptists completely.[1] A wood turner was summoned before the council in 1543 because he refused to take the annual oath of his guild. The council permitted him to take his property and migrate to Moravia.[2] In August 1554 the council received a letter from the aged Wilhelm Reublin, who was seeking financial assistance and a quiet refuge for his last days. The council apparently declined to grant him asylum in Basel but gave him fifteen pounds for a rest cure at Baden.[3] A few Anabaptists who were held in prison in 1563 were read the mandate of 1530 and banished with their wives and children.[4] In the latter half of the century some migrated to Moravia. Late in the century the Anabaptist problem became more acute so that the council ordered on June 11, 1595, that the banishment of Anabaptists should be made more strict by confiscating their property.[5] The movement was never entirely extinguished in the Canton of Basel. Clandestine congregations continued to persist in the country districts (_Gemeinde auf dem Blauen_).

## Conclusion

Basel opposed the Anabaptists for religious and political reasons. These reasons were similar to those advanced by other cantons in their struggle against dissent. There is no evidence that Basel appealed to imperial or confederation norms to justify the persecution. The city council prided itself in being a "Christian magistracy." The Anabaptists were charged with being "disobedient and contemptuous" of this Christian magistracy because, as it was explained in the mandate of 1530, they did not hold that the magistracy was required among Christians, that the magistrate could not be a Christian, and that capital punishment should not be used against evil doers. The council was angered by their refusal to assume all the duties of citizenship, notably swearing the oath and giving military service. Although the council feared that Anabaptism would lead to refusal to pay taxes, tithes, and custom duties, no evidence of such noncooperation has been found. The council frequently made loose charges that the Anabaptists were seditionists, intimating that there might be a secret association between them and other manifestations of peasant and artisan unrest. Finally, the council thought of the city and countryside of Basel as a "Christian community" in which reigned peace, unity, and love. The Anabaptists aroused the people and thus destroyed the peace. They separated themselves from the established church and thus broke the unity of the commonwealth. They were contemptuous of the state-established clergy and disobedient to the magistracy and thus violated the claims of love to their neighbors. Anabaptists were, therefore, subject to punishment by the "Christian magistracy" for the "honor of God and the salvation of souls."

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[1] _Ibid._, pp. 50-51.

[2] Gast, _op. cit._, quoted by Burckhardt, _op. cit._, p. 51.

[3] _Ibid._, pp. 52-54.

[4] _Ibid._, p. 47.

[5] Ibid., p. 57.

The Anabaptists were spared from systematic persecution until 1529 because of the struggle among religious and political factions. Having an urban orientation, the council directed its attention to exterminating the movement first in the city and only later in the countryside. Basel perhaps underestimated the Anabaptist threat during the first years. She was impatient of any assistance from other governments. The city did not seem to have the tightly knit administrative system in the countryside as, for example, did Bern. All penal action seems to have been largely council-directed and administered. Basel appears not to have sent many communications to local officials concerning the Anabaptists. However, during those periods of intense persecution in 1529, 1530, and 1531 the Anabaptist problem appears from the documents to have consumed a major portion of the council's time. Basel's initial approach to the problem was to rid the city of Anabaptists by banishment. This was accompanied by warnings of more severe punishment. These empty threats, as they turned out to be, did not frighten the Anabaptists. The personal counseling and disputations of the clergy and councilmen seemed to have no decisive effect in curbing the movement. In course of time the council came to view Anabaptism as essentially a criminal problem. It experimented with different penal techniques, gradually employing methods of increasing severity: exile, imprisonment, imposition of fines and prison costs, torture--including flogging, the rack, the pillory, and "ducking," and executions by drowning, beheading, and hanging. Penal action was progressively extended to include not only avowed Anabaptists, but also casual attendants and sympathizers who gave the Anabaptists aid and refuge. Even in periods of intense persecution one finds instances of clemency, particularly with reference to the death penalty. The leaders were always singled out for the most harsh treatment. The council also used propaganda devices such as the compulsory public confession. The instrumentalities of the church--the pulpit, church discipline, and tours of inspection--were employed to check the movement. In 1531 when the Anabaptists were decisively crushed, the government used all of the above techniques in its concentrated attack on the movement.

The views of the Basel Anabaptists toward the magistracy were similar to those expounded by their brethren during the disputations in the Canton of Bern. The Basel Anabaptists never preached armed rebellion. Some like Hans Ludi had, before becoming Anabaptists, engaged in iconoclastic actions in village churches. Some like Heini Soder had been associated with the peasant disturbances. After becoming Anabaptists they generally were a quiet and temperate people. They believed that the magistrate was ordained of God to punish evil and promote good. They insisted that the magistracy was not a Christian institution and that a Christian could not serve as a magistrate.

However, at least six local officials are known to have been Anabaptists; or it might be said that six Anabaptists continued, at least for a time, as public officials. Hans Pfistermeyer stated that the sword was given the magistrate to punish the evil and the wicked and when not used for that purpose it should be kept in its sheath.[1] Implicit in his statement was the idea that the sword should not be used to punish matters of faith. The Anabaptists were frequently criticized that they went even beyond this dualistic position and denied to the magistracy the right of capital punishment. Perhaps Anabaptists differed among themselves on this issue. Anabaptists were agreed that the state should compel no one in his faith. They taught that all customs duties, taxes, tithes, and interest should be paid as a Christian duty,[2] although one instance is to be found where an Anabaptist from Zurich is said to have opposed the receipt or payment of interest and tithes.[3] They criticized severly the state supported clergy who derived their income from tithes, benefices, and rents.[4] Preachers and elders, they taught, should be completely dissociated from the state and should live according to Apostolic pattern without state support. The Anabaptists refused to participate in military service as was seen in the two Kappel Wars. Apparently conscripts could buy their release from military service. In at least one instance an Anabaptist appears to have gained his release by paying a stated sum.[5]

The Anabaptist attitude toward the oath is one of the more perplexing problems in the history of the movement in Basel. The government placed the highest importance on the oath as a symbol and pledge of citizenship. Oecolampadius called the oath "a sword of the magistracy."[6] Members of the guilds were required to take an annual oath of loyalty. Seldom was anyone released from prison without an oath promising to keep the peace. In all their statements of faith the Basel Anabaptists asserted that the swearing of an oath was a grave sin. Margaretha Madlinger declared in a hearing: "God the Father in Heaven shall preserve me from swearing an oath."[1] Hans Hersberger and his wife remained in prison two and a half years because they refused to promise under oath to obey the sentence of banishment. They were released only after taking the oath. The Anabaptists insisted that a simple affirmation was a sufficient substitute for the oath. It is surprising to find that, despite all this opposition to the oath, innumerable Anabaptists took the oath to gain release from prison and often disobeyed the terms of their sentences which they had affirmed or had sworn they would keep. Almost all the important Anabaptists had perjured themselves at one time or another. This embittered the government who concluded that Anabaptists were incorrigible perjurers. The Anabaptists had various justifications for taking and also failing to keep the oath. (1) One of the most frank explanations was that of an Anabaptist at the Disputation of 1529 who explained that he had often recanted under oath "out of weakness of the flesh."[2] (2) Related to this was the complaint that the oath was often administered under compulsion.[3] One brother who was seeking to minimize the importance of his recantation insisted that "the coerced oath is not morally binding."[4] (3) Many returned from exile contrary to their oath to see their families, to whom they said they owed a higher obligation than to the state. (4) Others returned from exile, because, they said, God's law transcended human law. They asserted that banishment was a violation of such Scriptural passages as these: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (Psalms 24:1) and "The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever" (Psalms 37:29). (5) It was extremely difficult for those, who had taken an oath not to give aid and comfort to Anabaptists, to remain firm in this resolve when many of their friends, neighbors, and relatives were dissenters. (6) Many a person who had renounced his Anabaptist faith found himself isolated in the community, considered a backslider by both the state churchgoers and the Anabaptists. Frequently the abjurer returned to the brethren, begged forgiveness for his waywardness, and was received again into fellowship.

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[1] Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, No. 288.

[2] Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, Nos. 268a, 288.

[3] Akt. Basel, Vol. VI, No. 412.

[4] Akt. Oek., Vol. II, No. 991.

[5] Akt. Basel, Vol. III, No. 623b.

[6] Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 94.

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[1] Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, No. 610, p. 564.

[2] Akt. Oek., Vol. II, No. 991, p. 789.

[3] Akt. Basel, Vol. IV, Nos. 364, p. 337; 610, p. 563.

[4] Akt. Basel, Vol. VI, No. 412, p. 447.

Basel has its significance in the history of Anabaptism in that in this canton the movement had several years of comparative freedom to grow and define itself before being crushed to the ground by a government which could tolerate no dissent.

# CHAPTER IX

## CONCLUSION

Contemporaries often praised the Anabaptists for their flawless moral conduct. The clergy of Bern, for example, declared in 1532 that "the Anabaptists have the appearance of outward spirituality to a far greater degree than we . . . and they avoid offensive sins which are very common among us."[1] Even Ulrich Zwingli, arch opponent of the movement, grudgingly conceded: "If you investigate their life and conduct, it seems at first contact irreproachable, pious, unassuming, attractive, yea, otherworldly. Even those who are difficult to please will say that their lives are excellent."[2] On first appearance, then, it seems most strange that these folk, whom Sebastian Franck declared were "drawing to themselves many sincere souls who had a zeal for God," were singled out by the civil authorities of the sixteenth century for the fate of imprisonment, torture, banishment, hanging, drowning. Why were the Anabaptists persecuted? Why did even mild-mannered churchmen like Haller, Capito, and Oecolampadius finally yield, though reluctantly, to the compelling logic of persecution?

### The Attitude of the Civil Authorities toward Anabaptists

A host of reasons were advanced by the various authorities to justify the suppression of the Anabaptists. One must distinguish between the publicly avowed reasons for persecution and those which were probably the real reasons. The essential reasons were few in number. First, the authorities believed that the Anabaptists were dismembering the church, the very body of Christ,

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[1] Cited in McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 36.

[2] Selected Works of Huldreich Zwingli, p. 127.

and thus shattering the ideal of a unified civil and religious community. The Swiss civil authorities were unprepared to countenance a pluralistic society. Although they had broken with Rome, they were still devoted to the vision--now more narrowly limited to the territorial community--of a Corpus Christianum. This concern for complete civic and religious solidarity was heightened by an acute anxiety for the safety of Reformation strongholds in a hostile world of Roman Catholicism. Second, the authorities feared that the Anabaptists were undermining the authority and prestige of the magistracy. These dissenters refused to bear arms. They challenged the accepted belief that a Christian should hold public office. They declined to swear the oath--the sacred symbol of community loyalty. Moreover, the Anabaptists refused so frequently to conform to the commands of the government that the magistrates feared that this civil disobedience would produce an epidemic of contempt for governmental authority. Third, they feared the missionary expansionism of the movement. They feared what might happen if a large segment of the community became Anabaptist. They were afraid of the effects upon the military establishment, the staffing of the magistracy, the perpetuation of tradition-honored civic customs. Above all they harbored forebodings that a large body of dissent would play havoc with the carefully laid plans for a new Reformed state church order. Fourth, the authorities could not erase from their minds a gnawing anxiety that this peaceful-appearing movement harbored revolutionary potentialities which might break forth with savage violence at some future time. Such dread was later fanned by the reports circulating concerning the Münster Revolution. This evil of persecution was the only way to prevent, they thought, a greater future evil--a revolutionary catastrophe. Fifth, the authorities were deeply annoyed by the boldness and forthrightness with which the Anabaptists challenged their political superiors. Officials viewed Anabaptist behavior as insolent, disrespectful of the heirarchical qualities of sixteenth century society. Despite these fears and antipathies, many of the civil authorities were prepared to work out a modus vivendi with the Anabaptists. They offered the concession that if the Anabaptists would only remain quiet, attend church, baptize their children, and cease to evangelize, then they could be tolerated.

The polemical literature of the time and the mandates of persecution were filled with a variety of other accusations against the Anabaptists. It appears probable that among all these charges were many which were scarcely believed by those who uttered them. They were a part of a propaganda offensive. These accusations often became wildly indiscriminate and exaggerated as the struggle against the dissenters was prolonged. The Anabaptists, it was declared, were contemptuous in their behavior toward the clergy of the established church. They despised orthodox Christian doctrine, although in their more sober moments the churchmen acknowledged that the Anabaptists were one with them in the fundamentals of the evangelical faith. They were accused of being in secret alliance with the Roman Catholics. They were declared guilty of every conceivable kind of immoral act: hypocrisy, lewdness, theft, deceit, adultery, sexual orgies, murder. Their enemies called them communists. They were accused of undermining the fiscal foundations of the civil community by their alleged teachings against the payment of interest, taxes, tithes, and other dues imposed by the government. As the fight against Anabaptism became more intense, increasingly the major accusation against them was that they were dangerous seditionaries, plotters of rebellion. Their final purposes, some charged, was so to increase their numbers that they could emancipate themselves from the authority of the magistracy. With the possible exception of the alleged contempt of the Anabaptists for the state clergy, the annals of the movement provide no evidence supporting these multifarious accusations.

The towns and territories of Switzerland were under no overriding legal compulsion to suppress the Anabaptists. The resolutions of the Swiss Diet were legally binding upon member states only when they specifically concurred with particular Confederation covenants, as, for example, when St. Gall, Bern, and Zurich agreed to the Concordat of 1527. The imperial mandates and recesses, echoing ancient Roman sanctions against heresy and rebaptism, constituted for the Swiss governments a more remote authority for persecution. Swiss civil authorities had embarked upon the task of suppressing the Anabaptists before either the Concordat of 1527 or the imperial recesses and mandate of 1528 and 1529 were published. These imperial and confederate laws against the Anabaptists had their effect, however, by confirming and strengthening the civil authorities in their determination to rid their lands of this nonconformist movement. We may conclude that the primary impetus for the programs of persecution came not from the dictates of venerated legal authority so much as from the exigencies of local circumstances.

The Swiss governments resourcefully employed a wide range of methods in their efforts to suppress the Anabaptists. There were, first, the techniques of persuasion; second, the techniques of legal restriction; and third, the techniques of physical and economic coercion. The several governments, as we have seen, differed among themselves in the types of tactic and strategy employed to stamp out Anabaptism.

Throughout the Reformation period most governments never ceased in their efforts to persuade the Anabaptists to abandon their position. Councils appointed their own members, as well as clergymen and trustworthy ex-Anabaptists, to confer privately with the Anabaptists about the error of their ways. Some employed the gentle, patient pastoral approach. Others approached them more severly--issuing stern rebukes and grave warnings. Magistrates soon recognized that only those who were versed in Scripture could counsel effectively with Anabaptists. The public disputation, a favorite instrument of the age, was also frequently used as a device for debating the fundamental issues advanced by the Anabaptists and lifting up the dissenters' views to public censure. In such localities as Schaffhausen there was a prolonged series of public debates. With the possible exception of Zurich, where they confronted the crushing debating talents of Zwingli, the Anabaptists were usually eager for these public encounters. In these disputations the Anabaptists demonstrated consistently their superlative command of the Scriptures. The clergy, too, were generally eager parties to these debates. Frequently the Anabaptists complained that their debating opponents and the government-appointed presiding officers were in league and thus thwarted the realization of a completely fair debate. The civil authorities appear to have been the least enthusiastic of all parties. They seem to have discerned that very few Anabaptists were dissuaded from their convictions as a result of these public contests. Another one of the techniques of persuasion was to use the press and the pulpit to convince Anabaptists and their sympathizers of the rightness of government policy. The authorities encouraged the publication of polemical literature against the movement. Official mandates and statements concerning the perils of Anabaptism were frequently ordered to be read from the pulpit and even to the whole citizenry meeting in open assembly.

More effective, perhaps, than any of the other techniques of persuasion was the sustained effort in many areas to organize a more disciplined state church order. This endeavor to purify and systematize the church order was prompted in part by a recognition that the Anabaptist movement grew because the established church was lax. The civil and clerical authorities introduced in the church such innovations and reforms as the following: compulsory registration in the church of all baptisms and marriages, compulsory church attendance, plans for systematic pastoral visitation, codes of public conduct supported by legal sanctions, heightened concern for the selection of well-qualified pastors. All these techniques of persuasion--the kindly pastoral counseling, the learned arguments in public disputation, the polemical tracts, and the emergence of a better disciplined state church--these techniques were insufficient to halt the advance of Anabaptism.

Almost from the very first appearance of the Anabaptist movement the civil authorities sought to curb the movement by prohibitory restrictions. One of the first measures was simply to ban all unauthorized meetings and all unauthorized preaching. Coupled with this was legislation compelling regular church attendance and observance of certain ordinances such as infant baptism. Censorship hampered and more often prevented the publication of Anabaptist writings. Special civic oaths were introduced in which the citizen was required to pledge himself to avoid all forms of dissent and to keep the public peace. Those who recanted of their Anabaptist errors were often compelled to atone for their sins by making public confession in the city minster or village chapel. It was soon discovered by the several governments that simple legal restrictions and prohibitions could not stem the tide of an aggressive Anabaptist movement.

All civil authorities appear to have come to the conclusion that the only effective way of containing and turning back the movement was to impose a whole range of coercive measures. Heavy fines were levied upon Anabaptists, those who attended their meetings, and those who manifested sympathy for the movement. In most areas the citizenry was required under threat of punishment to refuse hospitality--board, room, and assistance--to Anabaptists and especially their leaders. Anabaptists were cast into prison where the treatment received varied from kindness to extreme cruelty. Sometimes Anabaptists, both male and female, were herded together into common cells. Often they were confined to prison on a bread and water diet, refused visitors, kept in dark cells, denied the privilege of removal to other quarters in event of illness. Apparently the jailers in the villages were more benevolent and lax, because one observes that the central authorities often demanded that Anabaptist prisoners should be brought to the territorial prison where they would be subject to more rigorous surveillance. All Swiss governments appear on occasion to have used torture. They employed it to extract information, to compel recantations, and to give warning of severer punishments yet to come. Many Anabaptists were placed in neck irons. Some were immersed repeatedly in water until almost drowned. Others had their cheeks branded and a few their tongues cut out. The black arts of torture, however, were not so highly developed in Protestant Switzerland as in Roman Catholic lands. In later stages of the fight against Anabaptism the authorities confiscated the property of dissenters. Some legislation threatened to destroy Anabaptist property by fire. Another effective socio-economic weapon was to declare that the children of Anabaptist couples were illegitimate and not legal heirs.

Every government used freely the device of banishing its Anabaptists. They singled out particularly Anabaptists of foreign residence, often specifically naming in council orders those to be exiled. Frequently the authorities escorted the Anabaptists to the cantonal borders to insure compliance with the orders of exile. Neighboring cantons were occasionally given advance warning that particular Anabaptists were being exiled. Most distressing to the authorities were those Anabaptists who returned in violation of their banishment. The governments often imposed on the exiles a pledge or an oath never to return. These coerced pledges or oaths were often violated, laying the Anabaptists open to charges of perjury.

The ultimate in punishment were the acts of execution--beheading, drowning, hanging. Only in Catholic lands do the Anabaptists appear to have been burned at the stake. Those who were ferreted out for execution were, of course, the leaders--the missionaries, preachers, and elders. Executions were frequently staged in a prominent central location where the populace might observe the fearful punishment. The authorities hoped that these acts of terror would compel faint hearts to return to the bosom of the established church. Concurrently with these harsh punishments, the Swiss governments held forth to the Anabaptists the olive branch of full pardon to any who would renounce their faith. The least likely to receive clemency were the prominent leaders and those who had recanted the Anabaptist position but returned thereafter to the ways of nonconformity. They were punished with a heavy hand.

The methods for suppressing the movement have been discussed: persuasion, legal restriction, and physical and economic coercion. These general methods were effectively implemented by a variety of administrative techniques. These administrative devices shed light on how Swiss governments operated during the early sixteenth century. The more vigilant of the town councils dispatched a continuous stream of instructions and orders to local officials on how to handle the problem. Conscientious local officials responded with detailed intelligence reports from the field. The town councils often sent out orders to local officials and clergy warning them under threat of punishment not to be negligent in the administration of the laws directed against the Anabaptists. As an added precaution the clergy and laity were ordered to report any evidence that the state officials were derelict in the performance of their duties; similarly the officials were instructed to watch that the clergy conformed to the dictates of all mandates. Civil authorities frequently emphasized that it was crucially important to select well-qualified judges, officials, and clergymen if the Anabaptist tide was to be repulsed. Most governments recognized that the Anabaptist problem could not be solved on a local, cantonal basis, but required a cooperative, inter-territory approach. The several governments kept one another informed, therefore, of the movements of Anabaptists considered particularly dangerous. Several Swiss governments joined forces, as in the Concordat of 1527, to correlate their legal offensive. The more effective programs against Anabaptism were centralized in the capital towns. Trials, imprisonments, and executions were usually conducted in a central location where rigorous administration of justice could be assured and where a maximum publicity value might be derived. Some governments found it useful to employ the services of special espionage agents to spy out Anabaptist meetings and activities. In several territories all citizens were bound by oath to serve as informers on Anabaptist suspects. One of the most effective techniques was that of equipping and deputizing forces of vigilantes to capture Anabaptists. In some instances they were designated as "Anabaptist hunters;" they combed the countryside in search of dissenters and were paid by the head for their captives. In other cases armed squads were appointed who could be summoned instantly by the magistrate and dispatched to a reported trouble spot. Finally, it was a studied technique of most governments to single out for special punishment the leaders of the movement, the areas of Anabaptist concentration, and the friends and patrons of the movement.

The implementation of the coercive measures of the authorities was often hampered by the widespread sympathy among the general population for the Anabaptists. The official hostility for dissenters was not shared by most of the citizenry. Many citizens granted their Anabaptist neighbors food and shelter and in time of danger protection from the law.

The Anabaptist issue was often inextricably bound up with local issues. One observes many local rural areas seeking desperately to preserve their ancient legal prerogatives against the centralizing tendencies of the town councils. These dissident political forces gave aid and encouragement to the Anabaptists, who for essentially religious reasons were also resisting the centralizing controls of the town councils. The Anabaptists were extinguished at an early date from the cities but clung on tenaciously in rural areas. At least two factors explain the rural strength of the movement: first, the rural terrain gave protective cover to the Anabaptists in their clandestine existence; second, political localism coincided in some of its concerns with this religious nonconformity. The Anabaptists often received unexpected support from certain influential elements high in the counsels of government. Sometimes support came from individuals and groups who had a genuine sympathy for the movement and who favored moderation and toleration. In other cases support came from those who opposed the power aggrandizement and centralizing efforts of the dominant faction. There were also instances where the secret Catholic minority in the councils urged clemency for the Anabaptists because they feared that they would become the next victims. The Catholic faction often welcomed an active Anabaptist movement as a thorn in the side of the Protestant majority. The persecution of the Anabaptists, therefore, was frequently complicated by internal political problems.

One may inquire in conclusion what methods were most effective in attaining the objective of suppressing the Anabaptist movement. First, it would appear that the arts of persuasion--polemical literature, pastoral counseling, and public disputation--were not very convincing to most Anabaptists. More persuasive to them was the visible evidence of a revitalized, disciplined church. Second, the task of suppressing Anabaptism required the services of strong, driving, single-minded leadership. Ulrich Zwingli gave this kind of leadership in Zurich. Third, it was essential that the magistracy should not underestimate the virility of the movement. For several years Basel saw no threat in Anabaptism and the movement spread rapidly. From the outset Zurich viewed Anabaptism as a dangerous threat and quickly curbed the movement. Fourth, the suppression of the movement required more than prohibitory restrictions on the statute books. The governments which were most effective in containing and eliminating Anabaptism were those which applied physical and economic coercion in a sustained, unwavering manner. Essential to the task of suppression was the maintenance of a continuity of pressure. There could be no respite from this sustained persecution. Further, it was essential that this coercive pressure be directed particularly against the leaders, the patrons, and the centers of strength of the movement. The only moderation which could be permitted in this pattern of coercion was clemency to those who would recant.

## The Attitude of the Anabaptists toward the Civil Authorities

The views of the civil authorities toward the Anabaptists has been surveyed. What in turn was the response of the Anabaptists to the authorities? First, one observes that in the earliest days of the movement the Anabaptists entertained hopes that church and state could be won to the brotherhood. Hence, Conrad Grebel, Balthasar Hubmaier, and their colleagues sought out those in authority to gain them as converts. Second, the Anabaptists begged of the governments that the movement be permitted freedom to grow. Repeatedly they requested official permission to publish their writings. They urged that proper public hearings be granted their cause. They petitioned councils for safe-conduct papers to enter the capital towns to plead their case. Third, as the hand of suppression descended, the Anabaptists felt compelled to disobey the prohibitory laws. They continued to assemble and to preach despite the law. They refused under questioning to divulge the names of their brethren. The leaders roamed the land despite laws prohibiting itinerant evangelism. The Anabaptists eluded their persecutors by hiding out in forest and mountain. Fearing that they would not receive fair trial, they refused in some instances to surrender themselves to the court. Non-Anabaptists granted their harried Anabaptist neighbors hospitality and aid despite threats of dire punishment. Amidst persecution and suffering they encouraged one another in their faith. They accepted suffering patiently, convinced that persecution was the earthly lot of all true children of God. The magistrates complained that the Anabaptists "remained intractable" in the presence of governmental authority; others conceded in moments of charity that the Anabaptists were of "unsurpassed courage" under persecution. This steadfastness, courage, and tranquillity throughout imprisonment and in the hour of execution moved many citizens to a feeling of compassion for the Anabaptists. Finally, however, some Anabaptists yielded to the persistent demands of the authorities and recanted their faith. Whereas in certain areas--notably in St. Gall--many recanted, in most regions the number who recanted appear to have been few. Persecution did not decimate the ranks of the committed brethren so much as it discouraged those interested, sympathetic folk who might have identified themselves with the movement had not the commitment appeared so dangerously costly.

Persecution eventually remolded the movement. Anabaptism was driven from the cities. It persisted in remote rural regions. Prolonged persecution dulled the missionary edge of the movement. The Anabaptists appear to have gradually become more quietistic in their attitudes toward government. They, of course, continued vigorously to defend their nonconformist ways. All that they asked of governments was to be left alone to be "the quiet in the land."

As the Anabaptists diligently searched their Scriptures and as they confronted governments in a continuous series of encounters, a theory of the Christian's relationship to the civil authorities took form in their minds. In the intensely confident early days of the movement some Anabaptists may have hopefully anticipated a new apostolic order where the secular magistracy would not be required. Soon, however, they appear to have accepted the view that God had destined them to be a small minority in a hostile, secular world. Consequently they were prepared to acknowledge that in a sinful world government was a necessity for the maintenance of peace and order.

First, the Anabaptists acknowledged the primacy of the claims of God over the claims of government. They often quoted the words of Peter: "We ought to obey God rather than men."[1] They rooted their theory concerning the Christian's obligation to the state in their conception of discipleship. The Christian is essentially a citizen of the Kingdom of Christ and not of this world. The Kingdom of Christ is alienated and sharply separated from the kingdoms of this world. The Christian knows that those who are obedient to the commandments of God will be persecuted. The Christian is prepared to suffer meekly the pain and persecution of this world because his citizenship is in heaven. From this view stemmed the Anabaptist conviction that a Christian is obedient to the government only in so far as the claims of the magistracy do no injury to the Christian's pursuit of the will of God.

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[1] Acts 5:29.

Second, the Anabaptists affirmed the doctrine that the magistracy was ordained of God to punish the evil and protect the good. Romans 13 was the foundation and starting point for all Anabaptist discussion of the civil authority. They differed from their contemporaries in declaring that a magistrate could be a Roman Catholic, a Protestant, or even a non-Christian and still satisfactorily fulfill the divinely-ordained role of the civil ruler.

Third, the Anabaptists did not fully clarify their viewpoint as to whether the magistracy had functional value for earnest Christians. All were agreed that the magistracy was essential for non-Christians. (They did not, however, go so far as to state that all non-Anabaptists were ipso facto non-Christians.) Further, all agreed that the magistracy had absolutely no right or responsibility toward the life and polity of the brotherhood. Beyond these affirmations the Anabaptists seem to have differed among themselves as to whether Christians required the services of governments. The few fragments of Anabaptist expression on this issue indicate that some asserted that everyone, even Christians, required a magistracy, while others declared that among Christians the magistracy had no essential function to perform.

Fourth, the Anabaptists agreed unanimously that the Christian owes obedience to the civil authorities in so far as the prior claims of God are not violated in those duties. The Christian gives this obedience freely and not grudgingly. He pays taxes, tithes, interest, and customs as required by the magistracy. No evidence can be found to substantiate the frequently-made accusation that the Anabaptists refused to pay these obligations. The Anabaptists consistently taught that a Christian should suffer nonresistantly the rule of all princes--even tyrants. The Christian might be compelled by the dictates of his conscience to disobey the magistrate in particulars, but the Christian disavowed completely any recourse to general rebellion. The Swiss Anabaptists were eager for change, but only peaceful change. No evidence indicates that they were proponents of violent revolution.

Fifth, the Anabaptists were generally of the conviction that a Christian could not occupy the office of the magistrate. Some who became Anabaptists appear to have continued, at least for a while, as local officials of government. Some Anabaptists declared categorically that no Christian could be a magistrate. Others granted that a Christian might under certain circumstances be a magistrate, but they added that it would be extremely difficult for a magistrate who became a Christian to remain long in office without compromising his faith. The principal reason given why a Christian could not hold office was that the magistrate ruled by force while the Christian was nonresistant. Moreover, a Christian was a servant, not a ruler. If a Christian were a magistrate it would undermine the equality of the brotherhood. The Christian could not be a judge in civil and criminal cases without violating scriptural precepts. Finally, the Christian had another vocation in the world than that of heading secular government. The Anabaptists were quite unimpressed by arguments that Christian occupancy of the magistracy was essential to good government. It is to be observed that whereas the issue was often discussed whether a new convert could remain in the magistracy, the Anabaptists never raised the question whether the Christian, out of a sense of civic-Christian duty, ought to enter the magistracy. In the context of that day it would no doubt have seemed unrealistic to discuss whether a separatist, nonresistant, Anabaptist-kind of Christian could or even should have a place in the magistracy.

Sixth, the Anabaptists were convinced that a government-established church violated the precepts of Scripture. They advocated the disestablishment of the state church or--stated differently--the separation of church and state. The Anabaptists taught that the state had absolutely no rights or responsibilities of supervision, interference, and coercion in the affairs of the church. The Anabaptists reserved their most caustic words for the state clergy and the established church. To them the state clergy were "hirelings of the rulers." They charged that the clergy preached under the protection of their state paymasters and not freely under the Cross of Christ. They condemned particularly the benefice system based on income from interest, rents, and tithes--to them an iniquitous form of usury. They saw the established church as a broad, inclusive, lax institution filled with unrepentant and undisciplined sinners. They saw it as an institution under the domination of the government. They urged that the true church should be a gathered, exclusive, heroic, disciplined church of believers completely severed from all control by the state. As advocates of the disestablishment of the state church, the Anabaptists were essentially calling for a government with more limited powers than was traditional in that era.

Seventh, the Anabaptists were devoted believers in nonresistance. As such they renounced all warfare and all use of the sword. Their simple, all-sufficient reason for nonresistance was that Christ had forbidden his followers to use the sword. They added that a Christian "suffers rather than resists evil." Apparently military service did not then have the universal compulsory character which made of it an acute problem for the Anabaptists. No evidence can be found that they engaged in military service. A suggestion of an exception was that of the two Anabaptists from Waldshut who refused combatant duty but offered noncombatant service to their beleaguered town. Balthasar Hubmaier, of course, was a lone voice raised in defense of the Christian's use of the sword. More of an immediate, crucial issue to the Anabaptists than warfare and military service was the magistrate's use of the sword to punish dissenters and evil doers. All Anabaptists would appear to have agreed that in matters of faith no one should be physically coerced. It is not clear, however, whether all Anabaptists would have insisted that the government should renounce all use of capital punishment. The Schleitheim Confession, for example, states: "In the Law the sword was ordained for the punishment of the wicked and for their death, and the same sword is now ordained to be used by the worldly magistrates." Hans Marquardt found the sword of government "good and necessary." Other Anabaptists, however, specifically condemned any use of capital punishment. One brother stated that even a non-Christian magistrate ought not to execute thieves or murderers. It appears that the prevailing conviction among Anabaptists was that magistrates should abandon the use of the sword in the punishment not only of religious dissenters but also of common criminals.

Eighth, the Anabaptists refused to swear the civil oath on the grounds of Christ's admonition: "Let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay." Since the ancient loyalties and traditions of the community found their symbolic center in the civic oath, this rejection of the oath was deeply disturbing and puzzling to the authorities. The Anabaptists were prepared as an alternative to make a simple affirmation where an oath would otherwise be required. It has been noted, however, that although they rejected the oath on principle, many Anabaptists under pressure took an oath recanting their faith. Others sentenced to exile solemnly swore or affirmed that they would never return but then they often broke their oath by returning to their former haunts. To the magistrates this was perjury. The Anabaptists offered varied explanations. Some confessed that they had sworn the oath out of weakness of the flesh. Others insisted that the oath had been extracted by the magistrates under conditions of duress. Despite these deviations from principle, opposition to the civil oath was a universal precept among the Anabaptists.

Ninth, the Anabaptists believed that the New Testament dictated that no Christian should bring suit in a court of law. The Christian should suffer patiently the loss of possessions or status rather than demand redress in the secular courts. Although the Anabaptists refused to sue in court in behalf of their rights, they did not hesitate to appeal to the authorities for the rights of fair hearing and trial customarily accorded the defendant.

Tenth, the Anabaptists refused in many ways to conform themselves to civic mores. They did not frequent the drinking houses. They declined to carry the traditional ceremonial side weapon. They failed to participate in the civic assemblies. Much of the ceremonial ritual of civic life was to them a worldly abomination from which true Christians were to separate themselves. This nonconformity of the Anabaptists was scarcely intelligible to the good burghers who loved their town's venerable traditions.

A British church historian recently wrote that the earliest modern exponents of religious liberty were the Anabaptists of the Reformation period.[1] Because of the issue of religious freedom and toleration is a subject of great contemporary interest, it seems appropriate to conclude this summary discussion with a consideration of whether the Anabaptists actually did advocate religious liberty. The term "religious liberty" may be considered to have the following basic elements: (1) the freedom of the individual in the exercise of his conscience; (2) the right of religious association and the right to corporate expression of group convictions; (3) individual and corporate belief and practice not subject to external restraint, if behavior remains within the bounds of public order and security; (4) equal political, social, and economic status before the law for all regardless of confession; (5) the mutual recognition by individuals and groups of one another's right to religious liberty.[2] In addition the separation of church and state seems to be an important factor frequently--although perhaps not invariably--accompanying religious liberty and contributory to its basic elements.

The Anabaptist attitudes toward these several principles were not always explicitly expressed; rather the Anabaptist views were often to be found implicit in life and action. First, the Anabaptists recognized no restraint upon the free expression of their conscience. An individual's faith was a gift of God and, thus, beyond the domain of civil authority. Second, their teaching that the church was a voluntary fellowship, not to be established by compulsion, implied a concept of the right to free association for religious purposes. Third, they were most specific in condemning state coercion of religious conviction. Faith should be "voluntary and uncompelled." Fourth, although the Anabaptists said little concerning the equal rights of all citizens before the law, they occasionally declared to the magistrates that they like others should be permitted to enjoy equal status before the law. Perhaps this suggests a recognition that all men, regardless of religious affiliation, ought to be allowed equal status. Fifth, the Anabaptists appear to have recognized the religious integrity of those of other persuasions. This is suggested, for example, by Felix Manz's alleged teaching that those of other faiths ought to be respected and left undisturbed in their practice. Finally, they affirmed unmistakably the principle of separation of church and state. They insisted that the state had no rights of supervision or intervention in the affairs of the church and, therefore, should be categorically excluded from all responsibilities in the church.

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[1] Payne, op. cit., p. 7.

[2] M. Searle Bates, Religious Liberty: an Inquiry (New York: International Missionary Council, 1945), pp. 295-310; Sanford H. Cobb, The Rise of Religious Liberty in America (New York: Macmillan Co., 1902), pp. 2-9; Francesco Ruffini, Religious Liberty (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), p. 16; Guido de Ruggiero, "Religious Freedom," Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, ed. Edwin R. A. Seligman (New York: Macmillan Co., 1930-35), XIII, 239-46.

The only Anabaptist who appears to have anticipated and specifically approved a pluralistic society was Balthasar Hubmaier. He taught that variety and competition were good for the true faith. "Faith which flows from the gospel fountain," he urged, "lives only in contests. . . ." His teaching would imply that it is good for the gospel to have several contending elements in society which relate themselves to each other in an atmosphere of freedom and mutual respect.

The Anabaptists may not have articulated a conception of religious liberty in the fullness and explicitness of a modern definition. Judged, however, by their lives and the totality of their teaching, the Anabaptists advocated religious liberty. They sought a society where men could covenant together, worship, and live freely according to the dictates of their conscience.

The prolonged encounter between the Anabaptists and the civil authorities in the sixteenth century exposed issues which have continued to the present day to be fundamental in the problem of church and state relationships.

# APPENDIX I

## SECTION II OF THE CONCORDAT OF THE CITIES OF ZURICH, BERN, AND ST. GALL AGAINST THE ANABAPTISTS, AUGUST 14, 1527[1]

1. Diewyl wir dann, wie oben anzöigt, bericht sind, dass der kindertouf durch die allgemeinen wort: "Gand hin und lerend alle völker, sy toufende in dem namen des Vaters und Suns und heiligen Geists," alle menschen und völker begriffen, und niemand davon gesündert noch usgeschlossen wirt, und aber die widertöufer einen underscheid zwüschen dem touf der alten und ouch der kinder, ane Gottes wort und ane alle christenliche und gegründte ursachen der sündrung machen, so doch ouch die weltlichen recht wellen, dass man by dem gemeinen gesatz beliben söll, es werden dann rechtmessig ursachen der sündrung angezöigt; diewyl sich doch ouch nit gezimpt, uf bispil, was geschechen sye, sunder was geschechen söll, ze urteilen, als die widertöufer sagen, "die Apostel habend glöubig und verständig getouft und aber nit kinder, darum söll man sy nit toufen;" diss ist ein betrug und falsch, und mag beschliesslich nit folgen; so wirt ouch by den christlichen lerern, die unlang nach der Apostel zyten gelebt haben, luter befunden, dass der bruch des kindertouf von den zyten der Apostel an dieselbigen domals komen sye, darum ouch der kindertouf in gemeiner Christenheit christenlich und loblich harkomen und gehalten ist.

2. Uss disen und andern christenlichen und gegründten ursachen, so vormals in gehaltnen disputationen gnuogsamlich anzöigt, sind wir als christenliche undordenliche oberkeiten, so dann mit sölchen befleckten und ufrüerigen personen beladen, bewegt, uns zesamen ze thuon und derohalb underred und ratschlag (ze halten), wie wir diss unchristenlich, boshaftig, ärgerlich und ufrüerisch unkrut usrüten und tämmen möchten, und haben uns demnach einmüetiglich entschlossen, wie hernach von einem an das ander begriffen ist.

3. Und namlich des ersten haben wir angesechen und zuo halten geordnet und fürgenommen, so einer oder eine, frowen oder mann, jung oder alt, mit disem laster des widertoufs verdacht und verargwonet, dass der oder die angends von irer oberkeit der enden beschickt, und trüwlich und ernstlich davon abzestan, ouch daby der pen und straf, so ime daruf stande, ermant werden söllen.

4. Und damit sölicher verdacht und argwon offenbar werde, so soll ein jeder unser burger, underthanen und hindersässen by christenlicher ghorsame und siner gethanen eidspflicht schuldig und verbunden syn, wo er einen oder eine mit sölichem widertouf argwönig und verdacht wüsste oder erfüere, dass er die syner oberkeit der enden leiden und anzöigen wölle.

5. Item und welche also in dise sect und sündrung des widertoufs

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[1] *Die Eidgenössischen Abschiede aus dem Zeitraume von 1521 bis 1528*, No. 470, pp. 1141-43; copies of the Concordat of 1527 may also be found in *Akt. Basel*, Vol. II, No. 707; *Akt. Bern*, No. 1280; cf. Geiser, "Kondordat der Städte Zürich, Bern und St. Gallen gegen die Täufer," *ML*, II, 542-43.

fielen und sich nit bessren noch davon gänzlich abstan wellten, und in üsserliche, offne, tätliche handlung oder ergernuss kommen, so sy dann der enden burger oder insassen sind, söllen sy der oberkeit zuo penfal und straf . . . unablässlich zuo bezalen verfallen syn.

6. Wann aber einer frömd und usserthalb unser stett und landschaften dahin kommen wären (sic), söllen sy glych erstmals, so sy mit dem widertouf befleckt kuntlich erfunden, von den enden verwysen und verboten werden, und soll der für frömd gehalten werden, der usserthalb unser stett und landschaft oder dero, so mit uns in sölchem verstand wären, geboren und harkomen sind (sic).

7. Item und welicher also, über dass einer von statt und land verwisen und verboten wurde, wider sin gethane eidspflicht widerum an die end käme, dass dann der oder dieselbigen one alle gnad ertränkt werden söllen.

8. Item und so einer oder eine under den burgern und inwonern unser stetten und landschaften anderwert mit dem widertouf befleckt, und das uf den oder die kundlich erfunden wurde, soll der oder diselbigen mit noch einest so vil, als er davor zuo buoss bezalt hat, gestraft und gebüesst werden.

9. So aber einer oder eine von sölichem iren fürnemen nit abstan, sunder fräfenlich daruf verharren wellten, oder dass einer diser sect und rottierung ein namlicher fürgesetzter, als ein lerer, töufer oder ein underschlöufer, umschweifer und redlisfüerer wäre, old vormals darum us fänknuss gelassen und sich zuo bessern und davon agzestan versprochen, gelobt oder geschworen hätte, welichs under deren eins wäre, dass der oder dieselbigen ouch ertränkt werden söllen.

10. Item, als wir denn ouch by den vermelten widertöufern eine sündrung und zerteilung mit dem nachtmal Christi befunden haben, ist unser ansechen, will und meinung, dass sy sich andern gemeinen kirchen der enden, da sy ir wonung haben, verglichen und von andern kirchen nit sündren, sunder mit denselbigen das nachtmal Christi began oder aber, diewyl das ungefär wol beschechen mag, gänzlich damit stillstan söllen.

11. Und nachdem wir ouch bericht sind, dass vil armer, unschuldiger und einfaltiger personen, frowen und mann, jung und alt, mit den glissenden worten der widertöufer, so sy sich gebruchen, in diss sect ingefüert und verfüert, die das verborgen gift nit wüssen noch erkennen mögen, so behalten wir uns sampt und sunder hiemit bevor, die vermelten unsre bestimpten strafen ze mässigen, mindern oder ändern nach gestalt und gelegenheit der personen und sachen, ouch nach eins jeden verschulden, wie uns das je zuo zyten für zimlich und recht gedunken will, ungefarlich.

12. Item vir haben uns ouch mit einandern vereint und vertragen, ob einer, so mit disem widertouf verdacht und argwönig wäre, syn flucht und zuokeer in unser eins (old) der andern stett, landschaft und gebiet setzen, dahin fliehen und sich alda enthalten wellt, soll unser kein statt oder land denselbigen wider des andern willen nit enthalten, sunder den usser ir statt und land wisen, oder aber den und dieselbigen uf erfordern deren, von den (en) er entwichen wäre, zuo handen komen lassen, ungefarlich.

13. Zuo dem haben wir uns hiemit vorbehalten, ob etlich ander stett, landschaften und commun, unser jedes nachpurren oder anstözzer, sich mit uns und wir mit inen, diser widertöufer und irer bösen, lasterlichen und ufrürigen verhandlung halb, glycher gstalt inlassen, vereinen und vertragen wellten, dass wir das zuo jeder zyt wol thuon mögen, damit ir bös fürnemen dester

fuoglicher abgestellt werde, doch jetz und hinfüro unsern pünden, so wir mit unsern lieben Eidgnossen haben, in allweg unvergriffenlich und ganz unschädlich.

## APPENDIX II

## THE IMPERIAL MANDATE OF JANUARY 4, 1528, CONCERNING THE ANABAPTISTS[1]

Wir, Karll der fünfft, von gots gnaden erwelter Römischer keyser, zu allen zeyten merer des reichs etc., in Germanien, zu Hispanien, baider Sicilien, Hierusalem, Hungern, Dalmatien, Croatien etc. kunig, ertzhertzog zü Osterreich, hertzog zu Burgundi etc, grave zu Habspurg, Flandern und Tyroll etc., epieten allen und yegklichen unsern und des Hailigen reichs churfürsten, fürsten, gaistlichen und weltlichen prelaten, graven, freyen, herrn, rittern, knechten, hauptleuten, landtvögten, vitzthumben, vögten, pflägern, verwesern, amptleuten, schulthaissen, burgermaistern, richtern, räthen, burgern und gemainden und sunst allen andern unsern und des reichs underthanen und getrewen, in was wirden, standts oder wesens die sein, unser freuntschafft, gnad und alles gut.

Hoch- und erwirdigen, hochgebornen lieben freundt, neven, ohaimen, churfürsten, fürsten, wolgebornen, edlen, ersamen, andechtigen und lieben getrewen. Wiewol in baiden, gaistlichen und weltlichen, rechten der widertauff by schweren penen verbotten, und sunderlich die kaiserlichen recht bey höchster straff des todts gesatzt und geordnet, das kainer, so einmal nach christenlicher ordnung getaufft ist, sich widerumb oder zum andern mal tauffen lassen, noch ainen andern tauffen solle, so vernemen wir doch mit beschwerlichem gemüet, das solchs unangesehen, auch unbetracht der lang herbrachten christenlichen ordnungen und geprauchs, sich yetzundt vil im Hailigen reich Teutscher nation frawen und mansperson, uber das sie vormals in yrrer jugent den christenlichen tauff entpfangen, in kurtzen zeytten widerumb tauffen haben lassen, auch dero ain mercklich anzal sey, so zu solchem widertauff alles fleisz fürpredigen, rathen, raitzen und helffen und also ausz yrer selbst, frevelm mutwillen, erdichten erfundung und irrigen verfüerung ausserhalb alles grundts göttlicher schrifft ain aygen verdampte sect, etlich böse, auch ander vil unchristlich, grausame unnd unerhört artickel und ordenung erdacht und auffbracht, und das auch in solchem nit die geringst beschwerdt ist, das viler solcher widertauffer auffsatz und gemüet gäntzlich dahin gericht sey (wie dan ausz bösem, irrigem grundt nichts guts volgen mag), das sy in schein solcher yrer irrigen sect des widertauffs all ober- und erberkeit, auch gemain ruwig wesen, ordnungen und pollicey abzuthun, underzutrucken und zu verwüsten, ausz dem allem zuletst nichts gewissers, dan christenlichs plutsvergiessung ervolgen würde.

Dieweil dann solcher verpottner widertauff ausz irriger, böser vermessenhait zu dem waren christenlichen glauben und der rechten lieb des nechsten nit allain nit fürderlich, nutz noch dienlich ist, sonder zu verfürischer ergernüsz, verdamnüsz der seelen, zerrüttung erbars wesens unnd pollicey unnd vil anderer unschicklichait ain merckliche anraytzung unnd unleidliche pflantzung gepiert, so hetten wir uns der pillichait nach versechen, yr, die oberkaiten, solten gegen solcher ingewachssener beschwerdt des widerthauffs und zu abwendung desselben vleissiger und ernstlicher einsehen gehapt haben und werden also darumb als Römischer kayser der notturfft nach höchlich verursacht, euch ewrer als der oberkaiten und magistraten ampts und gepür in solchem zu erindern, hiemit von unser kayserlichen macht euch sampt und besonder ernstlich gepiettendt und wollendt, das yr ewer underthan, verwandten und angehörigen von solcher verpottnen, irrigen und beschwerlichen sect des widerthauffs und obberürtem yrem anhang durch ewer gepott und sunst auff den cantzeln durch christenliche und gelerte prediger getrewlich und ernstlich, auch der peen des rechten in solchem fall und zum fürdersten der grossen straff gottes, die sie zu gewarten haben, warnen, abweysen und erindern unnd gegen den, so also in solchem laster und irrung des widerthauffs erkündiget erfunden und betretten würden, mit obgedachten unnd andern gepürlichen penen des rechten, wie yr dann solchs ampts halber schuldig seyt, vleissig, und wie sich solchs gegen ainem yeden seinem verdienst nach gepüret und yr zu thun wol wisset, volnfaret und deszhalb nit sewmig seyet, damit solch ubel, wie gemelt, gestrafft und ander obberürter unrath und weyterung, so sunst darausz wachszen mag, verhüet und fürkommen werde, als lieb euch sampt und besonder sey, unser und des reichs höchste ungnad und straff zu vermeyden.

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[1] *Akt. Basel*, Vol. III, No. 6; copies of the Mandate of January 4, 1528, may also be found in *Q. Württ.*, pp. 1*-2*, and Paul Wappler (ed.), *Die Täuferbewegung in Thüringen von 1526-1584*, Vol. II of *Beiträge zur neuren Geschichte Thüringens* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1913), No. 15.

Geben in unser und des reichs statt Speyer am vierdten tag des monats januarii nach Christi gepurdt fünffzehenhundert und im achtundzwaintzigisten, unserer reiche desz Römischen im neundten und der andern aller im zwölfften jaren.

Ad mandatum domini imperatoris proprium.

## APPENDIX III

## THE IMPERIAL MANDATE OF APRIL 23, 1529, CONCERNING THE ANABAPTISTS[1]

Wir Karl der funft [here appears Charles V's abbreviated title] empieten allen und jeglichen unsern und des h. reichs kurfürsten, fürsten, geistlichen und weltlichen, prelaten, graven, freien herren, rittern, knechten, hauptleuten, landvogten, vitztumen, vögten, pflegern, verwesern, amptleuten, schultheissen, burgermeistern, richtern, reten, burgern und gemeinden und sunst allen andern unsern und des reichs undertanen und getreuen, in was wirden, stands oder wesens die sein, unser freundschaft, gnade und alles gut.

Hoch- und erwirdigen, hochgepornen lieben freund, neven, oheimen, kurfürsten, fürsten; wolgebornen edlen ersamen andechtigen und lieben getreuen! Wie wol in gemeinen rechten geordnet und versehen, das keiner, so ein male nach christlicher ordnung getauft worden ist, sich widerumb oder zum zweiten male taufen lassen noch derselben einichen taufen soll, und fürnemlich in kaiserlichen gesetzen solichs zu bescheen bei straf des tods verpoten, daruf wir dann in anfang des nechstverschienen acht und zwainzigsten jars der mindern zale euch allen sampt und sonder als rö. kaiser oberster vogt und beschirmer unsers h. christlichen glaubens durch unser offen mandat ernstlich haben tun gepieten, euer undertanen, verwandten und angehörigen von demselben jetzo kürzlich neuen aufgestanden irsal und sect des widertaufs und derselben mutwilligen, verfürigen und aufrürigen anhang durch euer gepot und sunst auf den canzeln durch christliche gelerte prediger getreulich und ernstlich, auch der pene des rechten in solchem fall und sonderlich der grossen straf gottes, die sie zu gewarten haben, zu erinnern, zu ermanen, abzuweisen und zu warnen und gegen denen, so also in sollichem laster und irrung des widertaufs erkundiget, erfunden und betreten würden, mit straf der penen des rechten, wie sich sollichs gegen einem jeden seinem verschulden nach gepürt, zu vollenfaren und deshalb nit seumig zu sein, damit solch ubel gestraft und ander unrate und weiterung, so sunst daraus erwachsen, fürkummen und verhut würde: so befinden wir doch teglich, das uber angezeigt gemein recht, auch unser ausgangen mandat sollich alt vor viel hundert jaren verdampte und verpotene sect des widertaufs je lenger je mehr und schwerlicher einpricht und uberhand nimpt. Solliche ubel und was daraus folgen mage zufürkummen und fried und einigkeit im h. reich zu erhalten, auch alle disputacion und zweivel, so der straf halber des widertaufs zufallen möcht, aufzuheben, so verneuen wir die vorigen ksl. gesetz auch obgemelt unser darauf gevolgt und ausgekündt mandat, ordnen, setzen, machen und declariern demnach aus ksl. macht volkommenheit und rechter wissen und wollen, das alle und jede widertaufer und widergetauften mann und weibspersonen verstendigs alters von natürlichem leben zum tode mit dem feuer, schwerd oder dergleichen nach gelegenheit der personen, one vorgeend der geistlichen richter inquisicion, gericht und gepracht werden; und sollen derselben fürprediger, heuptsecher, landlaufer und aufrürische aufwigler des berurten lasters des widertaufs, auch die darauf beharren und diejenen, so zum andere male umbgefallen, hierin keins wegs begnadet, sonder gegen inen vermög dieser unser constitucion und satzung ernstlich mit der straf gehandelt werden. Welliche person aber iren irsal für sich selbs oder auf underricht und ermanen unverzüglich bekennen, denselben zu widerrufen, auch buss und straf daruber anzunemen willig sein und umb gnade bitten wurden, dieselbigen mögen von irer oberkeit nach gelegenheit ires verstands, wesens, jugent und allerlei umbstende begnadet werden.

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[1] *Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Kaiser Karl V*, pp. 1325-27; copies of the Mandate of April 23, 1529, may also be found in *Q. Württ.*, pp. 3*-5*; Neff, "Bestrafung der Taufer," *ML*, I, 207-8; Ludwig Keller, "Das Reichsgesetz gegen die Sogenannten Wiedertäufer vom 23. April 1529," *Monatshefte der Comenius Gesellschaft*, IX, Nos. 1-2 (1900), 55-57.

Wir wollen auch, das ein jeder sein kinder nach christlicher ordnung herkommen und geprauch in der jugent taufen lassen soll. Welliche aber das verachten und nit tun würden uf meinung, als ob kindertauf nichts sei, der soll, so er darauf zu beharren understünde, für ein widertaufer geacht und obangezeigter unserer constitucion underworfen sein. Und soll keiner derselbigen, so aus obangezeigten ursachen begnadet werden, an andere ort relegirt und verwiesen, sonder under seiner oberkeit zu pleiben verstrickt und verbunden werden, die dann ein fleissig aufsehens, damit sie nit wider abfallen, haben lassen soll. Dergleichen soll keiner des andern undertanen oder verwandten, so aus angezaigten ursachen von ihrer oberkeit gewichen oder ausgetreten, enthalten, underschleifen oder fürschieben; sonder alsbalt dieselbig oberkeit, darunder sich der entwichen enthelt, solcher uberfarung innen oder gewar wirdet, soll er gegen demselben, so also entwichen, laut obberurter unserer satzung strenglich handeln und sie daruber nit bei sich leiden oder dulden, alles bei pene der acht.

Heruf gebieten wir euch allen und jedem in sonderheit, wes würden, stands oder wesens ein jeder ist, bei den pflichten und eiden, damit ir uns und dem h. reich zugetan und verwant seit, auch unsere schweren ungenade und straf zu vermeiden, und wollen, das ir alle und euer jeder in sonder solliche unsere constitucion und satzung des widertaufs halber strenglich und vestiglich in allen stücken und puncten haltet, darauf urteilet, handlet, unnachlessig vollenziehet, euch auch herin mit solcher gehorsam und dermass erzeigt, wie ir zu tun schuldig und noturft der sachen für sich selbs erfordert. Des wollen wir uns also ungezweifelt versehen, ihr tut auch daran unser ernstlich meinung.

Geben in unser und des reichs statt Speyer am 23. tag des monats Aprilis nach Christi gepurt 1529 unserer reiche des römischen in 10. und der andern alle im 13. jare.

## APPENDIX IV

### THE DECREE CONCERNING THE ANABAPTISTS IN THE IMPERIAL RECESS OF SPEYER, APRIL 22, 1529[1]

Wir Ferdinand von gottes gnaden kunig zu Hungern und Beheim, infant in Hispanien, erzherzog zo Osterreich, herzog zu Burgundi, zu Steir, zu Kernten, zu Crain, in Slesien und zu Wirtemberg, marggrave zu Merhern und grave zu Tirol, stathalter im heiligen romischen reich, und von denselben gnaden wir Balthasar bischof zu Maltan, postulierter zu Hildishaim und coadiutor des stifts Costenz, orator general, Fridrich phalzgrave bei Rein, herzog zu Bairn, Wilhalm auch phalzgrave, herzog in Obern und Nidern Bairn, Erich herzog zu Braunsweig und Lunenburg und Bernhart bischove zu Trient, des allerdurchleuchtigisten, grossmechtigisten hochgebornen fursten and herrn, herrn Karls des funften erwelten romischen kaisers zu disem reichstag alher gen Speir sondere verordnete comissarien, bekennen und tun hiemit kund und offenlich: Machdem r. ksl. m., unser allergnedigister herr, aus erfordern der hohen notdurft zu furderung des h. r. reichs und sonderlich teutscher nacion er, nutz und wolfart ainen gemainen RT abermals alher gen Speir ausschreiben und verkunden lassen von etlich notwendigen puncten als des zwispalts halber unsers h. cr. glaubens, item wie und welchermassen dem Turken mit eilender hilf und beharrlichen widerstand begegent, auch Rgt und KG weiter underhalten werden mug, darzue andern notdurftigen sachen ferrers inhalts irer ksl. m. ausschreiben und instruction etc. zu handlen, zu ratslagen und entlich zubesliessen, und aber ir m. aus hochwichtigen und treffenlichen obligenden und verhinderungen auf solchem tag aigner person nit hat erscheinen mugen und uns von wegen irer m. darzue mit notdurftigem gwalt und instruction gefertigt, so haben wir laut und vermug desselbigen unsers gwalt und bevelchs, derglichen churfursten, fursten, prelaten, graven und stand des heiligen reichs so in dapferer anzal persondlich alhie erschinen und der abwesenden potschaften obgemelte und andere punct und artikl mit zeitigem, dapfern rat ermessen, erwegen und uns darauf samentlich ains abschids derselbigen ratsleg verainigt und verglichen wie derselbig von artikln hernach volgt. . . .

Nachdem auch kurzlich ain neu sect des widertaufs entstanden, so in gemainem rechten verpoten und vor vil hundert jarn verdampt worden ist, welche sect uber ksl, ausgangen mandat je lenger je mer swerlicher einbricht und uberhand nimpt, und dann ir m. solch swer ubel und waz daraus volgen mag zufurkumen und frid und ainigkait im heiligen reich zuerhalten, ain rechtmessig constitucion, satzung und ordnung aufgericht und allenthalb im h. reich zuverkunden verschafft also lautend, das alle und jede widertaufer und wider getaufte mannen und weibspersonen verstendigs alters von naturlichem leben zum tot mit dem feuer, schwert oder dergleichen nach gelegenhait der personen on vorgeend der geistlichen richter inquisicion gericht und gepracht werden, und sollen derselben fridprecher haubtsacher, landlaufer und die aufrurigen aufwigler des berurten lasters des widertaufs, auch die, so darauf beharren oder zum andern mal umbgefallen, in solchem kains wegs begnadet sonder gegen inen vermug solcher satzung ernstlich mit straf gehandlet werden; welche person aber iren irrsal fur sich selbs oder auf underricht und ermanung unverzuglich bekennten, denselben zuwiderruefen auch puess und straf daruber anzunemen willig sein und umb gnad pitten wurden, daz dieselbigen nach gelegenhait ires stands, wesens, jugend und allerlai umbstand mugen begnadet werden; daz auch ain jeder sein kinder nach chr. ordnung, herkumen undgeprauch in der jugent taufen lassen sol, welche aber daz verachten und nit tun wurden auf mainung, als sol derselbig kindertauf nicht sein, daz dieselben, so darauf zu beharren understuenden, fur ainen widertaufer geacht und obangezaigten ksl. constitucion underworfen sein, und sol kainer derselbigen, so aus obangezaigten ursachen begnad werden, an andere ort relogiert und verwisen, sonder under seiner obrigkait zu bleiben verstrickt und verpunden werden, die dann ain vleissig aufsehen haben sollen, damit si nit widerumb abfallen.

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[1] *Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Kaiser Karl V*, pp. 1298-1300; cf. *Q. Württ.*, pp. 2*-3*.

Dergleichen daz kainer des andern undertanen oder verwonten, so des widertaufs halber von irer oberkait gewichen oder ausgetreten, enthalten, underslaifen oder furschueben, sonder alspald dieselbig obrigkait, darunder sich der entwichen enthelt, solch uberfarung innen oder gewar wirdet, sol er gegen demselben, so entwichen, laut obberuerter ksl. satzung strenglich handlen und si daruber nit bei sich leiden oder dulden, alles bei pene der acht etc. Daz demnach wir auch kff., ff., prelaten, graven und stände uns ainmuetiglich verglichen, solcher ksl. constitucion, ordnung und satzung in allen oberzelten puncten und artiklen treulich und vleissiglich zugeleben, nachzukumen und zuvolziehen.

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